



# A SELECTION OF MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

*Annotated By*  
F. J. A. HARDING, M.A. (OXON.)



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## PUBLISHERS' NOTE

THIS book is designed as a reader of High School standard, and it contains no selection from any period of English literature that will not serve as a suitable model of clear, simple and refined English prose. There are nineteen extracts that represent a great variety of theme. An anthology cannot take the place of a single text; and its special function is best fulfilled by exhibiting a wide range of literature, of style and of subject, provided the extracts are self-contained and possess a central interest of their own.

In this book two things have been attempted—the literary and the linguistic study of English. This two-fold approach to English, it is hoped, will be helpful to those who look forward to the further prosecution of their study, and also to those who desire to acquire a sure foundation for the effective usage of this language.

For young Indian students it is imperative to select with meticulous care the subject-matter of their reading, if the purpose of the book that is given to them is to infuse a genuine taste and desire for the mastery of one of the most intriguing of languages. Themes that are most likely to arouse their interest, have been particularly chosen—themes connected with the East in general, or with India in particular; and themes that have contributed to the progress and making of our modern civilisation.

The book has been annotated by a teacher of English whose varied and practical teaching experience will go a great way to facilitate the study and understanding of the passages selected with the help of informative and instructive notes and exercises supplied by him.

## CHARLES DICKENS

CHARLES DICKENS (1812-1871) is still undoubtedly the best known English novelist. His works, which deal almost exclusively with life among the middle classes of nineteenth century England, gained for themselves an immediate popularity which has only been equalled by that gained by Scott's *Waverley Novels* earlier in the century.

Dickens combined pathos, humour and satire with an earnest desire to improve the social conditions of his age and no one did more to bring about reforms both legal and social than he. His most popular novel *David Copperfield* was largely based on the unhappy experiences of his own childhood.

*The Pickwick Papers* (1836-7) from which the following extract is taken, was the first book which established his fame. Its original plan was to describe the adventures of the members of an imaginary club, of which Mr. Pickwick was the chairman, but soon the club was lost sight of and the rest of the book revolves round the fascinating personality of Mr. Pickwick and the characters of his associates and servants, Mr. Snodgrass, Mr. Tupman, Mr. Winkle, Mr. Wardle, Sam Weller and the Fat Boy. This extract gives a fair example of the ludicrous situations in which the Pickwickians frequently landed themselves.

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## MR. PICKWICK AT THE MILITARY REVIEW

THE whole population of Rochester and the adjoining towns rose from their beds at an early hour of the following morning, in a state of the utmost bustle and excitement. A grand review was to take place upon the lines. The manœuvres of half a dozen regiments were to be inspected by the eagle eye of the commander-in-chief; temporary fortifications had been erected, the citadel was to be attacked and taken, and a mine was to be sprung.

Mr. Pickwick was an enthusiastic admirer of the army. Nothing could have been more delightful to

him—nothing could have harmonised so well with the peculiar feeling of each of his companions—as this sight. Accordingly they were soon afoot, and walking in the direction of the scene of action, towards which crowds of people were already pouring from a variety of quarters.

The appearance of everything on the lines denoted that the approaching ceremony was one of the utmost grandeur and importance. There were sentries posted to keep the ground for the troops, and servants on the batteries keeping places for the ladies, and sergeants running to and fro, with vellum-covered books under their arms, and Colonel Bulder, in full military uniform, on horseback, galloping first to one place and then to another, and backing his horse among the people, and prancing, and curvetting, and shouting in a most alarming manner, and making himself very hoarse in the voice, and very red in the face, without any assignable cause or reason whatever. Officers were running backwards and forwards, first communicating with Colonel Bulder, and then ordering the sergeants, and then running away altogether; and even the very privates themselves looked from behind glazed stocks with an air of mysterious solemnity, which sufficiently bespoke the special nature of the occasion.

Mr. Pickwick and his three companions stationed themselves in the front rank of the crowd, and patiently awaited the commencement of the proceedings. The throng was increasing every moment; and the efforts they were compelled to make, to re-

tain the position they had gained, sufficiently occupied their attention during the two hours that ensued. At one time there was a sudden pressure from behind, and then Mr. Pickwick was jerked forward for several yards, with a degree of speed and elasticity highly inconsistent with the general gravity of his demeanour; at another moment there was a request to "keep back" from the front, and then the butt-end of a musket was either dropped upon Mr. Pickwick's toe, to remind him of the demand, or thrust into his chest, to insure its being complied with. Then some facetious gentlemen on the left, after pressing sideways in a body, and squeezing Mr. Snodgrass into the very last extreme of human torture, would request to know "vere he vos a shovin' to"; and when Mr. Winkle had done expressing his excessive indignation at witnessing this unprovoked assault, some person behind would knock his hat over his eyes, and beg the favour of his putting his head in his pocket. These, and other practical witticisms, coupled with the unaccountable absence of Mr. Tupman (who had suddenly disappeared, and was nowhere to be found), rendered their situation upon the whole rather more uncomfortable than pleasing or desirable.

At length that low roar of many voices ran through the crowd which usually announces the arrival of whatever they have been waiting for. All eyes were turned in the direction of the sally-port. A few moments of eager expectation, and colours were seen fluttering gaily in the air, arms glistened brightly in

the sun, column after column poured on to the plain. The troops halted and formed; the word of command rang through the line; there was a general clash of muskets as arms were presented; and the commander-in-chief, attended by Colonel Bulder and numerous officers, cantered to the front. The military bands struck up altogether; the horses stood upon two legs each, cantered backwards, and whisked their tails about in all directions; the dogs barked, the mob screamed, the troops recovered, and nothing was to be seen on either side as far as the eyes could reach, but a long perspective of red coats and white trousers, fixed and motionless.

Mr. Pickwick had been so fully occupied in falling about, and disentangling himself, miraculously, from between the legs of horses, that he had not enjoyed sufficient leisure to observe the scene before him, until it assumed the appearance we have just described. When he was at last enabled to stand firmly on his legs, his gratification and delight were unbounded.

"Can anything be finer or more delightful?" he inquired of Mr. Winkle.

"Nothing," replied that gentleman, who had had a short man standing on each of his feet for the quarter of an hour immediately preceding.

"It is indeed a noble and a brilliant sight," said Mr. Snodgrass, in whose bosom a blaze of poetry was rapidly bursting forth, "to see the gallant defenders of their country drawn up in brilliant array before their peaceful citizens; their faces beaming—not with

warlike ferocity, but with civilised gentleness; their eyes flashing—not with the rude fire of rapine or revenge, but with the soft light of humanity and intelligence.”

Mr. Pickwick fully entered into the spirit of this eulogium, but he could not exactly re-echo its terms; for the soft light of intelligence burned rather feebly in the eyes of the warriors, inasmuch as the command “eyes front” had been given, and all the spectator saw before him was several thousand pairs of optics, staring straight forward, wholly divested of any expression whatever.

“We are in a capital situation now,” said Mr. Pickwick, looking round him. The crowd had gradually dispersed in their immediate vicinity, and they were nearly alone.

“Capital!” echoed both Mr. Snodgrass and Mr. Winkle.

“What are they doing now?” inquired Mr. Pickwick, adjusting his spectacles.

“I—I—rather think,” said Mr. Winkle, changing colour—“I rather think they’re going to fire.”

“Nonsense,” said Mr. Pickwick hastily.

“I—I—really think they are,” urged Mr. Snodgrass, somewhat alarmed.

“Impossible,” replied Mr. Pickwick. He had hardly uttered the word, when the whole half-dozen regiments levelled their muskets as if they had but one common object, and that object the Pickwickians, and burst forth with the most awful and tremendous discharge that ever shook the earth to its centres, or



an elderly gentleman off his.

It was in this trying situation, exposed to a galling fire of blank cartridges, and harassed by the operations of the military, a fresh body of whom had begun to fall in on the opposite side, that Mr. Pickwick displayed that perfect coolness and self-possession, which are the indispensable accompaniments of a great mind. He seized Mr. Winkle by the arm, and placing himself between that gentleman and Mr. Snodgrass, earnestly besought them to remember that beyond the possibility of being rendered deaf by the noise, there was no immediate danger to be apprehended from the firing.

"But—but—suppose some of the men should happen to have ball cartridges by mistake," remonstrated Mr. Winkle, pallid at the supposition he was himself conjuring up. "I heard something whistle through the air just now—so sharp; close to my ear."

"We had better throw ourselves on our faces, hadn't we?" said Mr. Snodgrass.

"No, no—it's over now," said Mr. Pickwick. His lip might quiver, and his cheek might blanch, but no expression of fear or concern escaped the lips of that immortal man.

Mr. Pickwick was right—the firing ceased; but he had scarcely time to congratulate himself on the accuracy of his opinion, when a quick movement was visible in the line; the hoarse shout of the word of command ran along it, and before either of the party could form a guess at the meaning of this new manœuvre, the whole of the half-dozen regiments,

with fixed bayonets, charged at double-quick time down upon the very spot on which Mr. Pickwick and his friends were stationed.

Man is but mortal; and there is a point beyond which human courage cannot extend. Mr. Pickwick gazed through his spectacles for an instant on the advancing mass, and then fairly turned his back and—we will not say fled; firstly, because it is an ignoble term, and, secondly, because Mr. Pickwick's figure was by no means adapted for that mode of retreat—he trotted away, at as quick a rate as his legs would convey him; so quickly, indeed, that he did not perceive the awkwardness of his situation, to the full extent, until too late.

The opposite troops, whose falling-in had perplexed Mr. Pickwick a few seconds before, were drawn up to repel the mimic attack of the sham besiegers of the citadel; and the consequence was that Mr. Pickwick and his two companions found themselves suddenly inclosed between two lines of great length, the one advancing at a rapid pace, and the other firmly waiting the collision in hostile array.

“Hoi!” shouted the officers of the advancing line.

“Get out of the way,” cried the officers of the stationary one.

“Where are we to go to?” screamed the agitated Pickwickians.

“Hoi—hoi—hoi!” was the only reply. There was a moment of intense bewilderment, a heavy tramp of footsteps, a violent concussion, a smothered laugh; the half-dozen regiments were half a thou-

sand yards off, and the soles of Mr. Pickwick's boots were elevated in air.

Mr. Snodgrass and Mr. Winkle had each performed a compulsory somerset with remarkable agility, when the first object that met the eyes of the latter as he sat on the ground, staunching with a yellow silk handkerchief the stream of life which issued from his nose, was his venerated leader at some distance off, running after his own hat, which was gambolling playfully away in perspective.

There are very few moments in a man's existence when he experiences so much ludicrous distress, or meets with so little charitable commiseration, as when he is in pursuit of his own hat. A vast deal of coolness, and a peculiar degree of judgment, are requisite in catching a hat. A man must not be precipitate, or he runs over it; he must not rush into the opposite extreme, or he loses it altogether. The best way is to keep gently up with the object of pursuit, to be wary and cautious, to watch your opportunity well, get gradually before it, then make a rapid dive, seize it by the crown, and stick it firmly on your head; smiling pleasantly all the time, as if you thought it as good a joke as anybody else.

There was a fine gentle wind, and Mr. Pickwick's hat rolled sportively before it. The wind puffed; and Mr. Pickwick puffed, and the hat rolled over and over as merrily as a lively porpoise in a strong tide; and on it might have rolled, far beyond Mr. Pickwick's reach, had not its course been providentially stopped, just as that gentleman was on the

point of resigning it to its fate.

Mr. Pickwick, we say, was completely exhausted, and about to give up the chase, when the hat was blown with some violence against the wheel of a carriage, which was drawn up in a line with half a dozen other vehicles on the spot to which his steps had been directed. Mr. Pickwick, perceiving his advantage, darted briskly forward, secured his property, planted it on his head, and paused to take breath. He had not been stationary half a minute, when he heard his own name eagerly pronounced by a voice, which he at once recognised as Mr. Tupman's, and, looking upwards, he beheld a sight which filled him with surprise and pleasure.

In an open barouche, the horses of which had been taken out, the better to accommodate it to the crowded place, stood a stout old gentleman, in a blue coat and bright buttons, corduroy breeches and top-boots, two young ladies in scarfs and feathers, a young gentleman apparently enamoured of one of the young ladies in scarfs and feathers, a lady of doubtful age, probably the aunt of the aforesaid, and Mr. Tupman, as easy and unconcerned as if he had belonged to the family from the first moments of his infancy. Fastened up behind the barouche was a hamper of spacious dimensions—one of those hampers which always awakens, in a contemplative mind, associations connected with cold fowls, tongues, and bottles of wine—and on the box sat a fat and red-faced boy, in a state of somnolency, whom no speculative observer could have regarded for an instant

without setting down as the official dispenser of the contents of the before-mentioned hamper, when the proper time for their consumption should arrive.

Mr. Pickwick had bestowed a hasty glance on these interesting objects, when he was again greeted by his faithful disciple.

"Pickwick—Pickwick," said Mr. Tupman; "come up here. Make haste."

"Come along, sir. Pray, come up," said the stout gentleman. "Joe!—damn that boy, he's gone to sleep again.—Joe, let down the steps." The fat boy rolled slowly off the box, let down the steps, and held the carriage door invitingly open. Mr. Snodgrass and Mr. Winkle came up at the moment.

"Room for you all, gentlemen," said the stout man. "Two inside, and one out. Joe, make room for one of these gentlemen on the box. Now, sir, come along;" and the stout gentleman extended his arm, and pulled first Mr. Pickwick, and then Mr. Snodgrass, into the barouche by main force. Mr. Winkle mounted to the box, the fat boy waddled to the same perch, and fell fast asleep instantly.

#### NOTES

**sprung** : exploded.

**vellum** : white parchment.

**curvetting** : an expression used of horses, when they leap with all four hooves off the ground at the same time.

**glazed stocks** : the varnished wooden parts of a musket.

**facetious** : given to jesting.

**"vere he vos a shovin' to"** : Slang—where was he pushing to?

**sally-port** : a gate from which the garrison of a fort may come out to attack besiegers.

**the troops recovered** : that is, returned their arms to the position of attention.

**eulogium** : speech of praise.

**manceuvre** : movement of troops.

**mimic** : sham; imitation.

**concussion** : blow.

**somerset** : somersault.

**precipitate** : over-hasty.

**wary** : (pronounce ware-y) cautious.

**porpoise** : a fish that tumbles over and over while swimming.

**a stout old gentleman** : Mr. Wardle, one of Mr. Pickwick's friends.

**Mr. Tupman** : the missing member of Mr. Pickwick's party.

**barouche** : carriage.

**hamper** : a picnic basket of large size, suitable for such hearty eaters as Mr. Wardle.

**a fat and red-faced boy** : the famous Fat Boy of the Pickwick Papers.

**somnolency** : sleepiness.

**waddled** : walked with the same motion as a duck.

### EXERCISES

1. Describe the adventures of Mr. Pickwick in pursuit of his hat.

2. Give a description of any military parade or similar display which you have seen.

3. What do we gather of the characters of Mr. Pickwick and his companions from this extract?

4. What happened to the Pickwickians at the Review? Describe their misfortunes in your own words.

5. Write sentences to show that you understand the difference in meaning between the words in the following groups:—

city, citadel; dancing, prancing; comply, comprise; perspective, prospective; divert, divest; hoarse, horse; sham, shame; providentially, provisionally; stationary, stationery.

6. Explain carefully the meaning of the following phrases:—

without any assignable cause or reason; with an air of mysterious solemnity; with a degree of speed and elasticity highly inconsistent with the general gravity of his demeanour; his gratification and delight were unbounded; the rude fire of rapine and revenge; several thousand pairs of optics; indispensable accompaniments; with remarkable agility; the stream of life which issued from his nose; on the point of resigning it to its fate.

## C. BERNARD RUTLEY

THIS is the story of the greatest medical discoveries of recent times. We see how people have gradually discovered the importance of eating the right kinds of food. It is everybody's duty now to use these discoveries to the best advantage.

The following passage is taken from an entertaining book by C. Bernard Rutley, entitled *The Book of Discovery*.

---

## THE DISCOVERY OF HEALTH

No doubt you will think this a very queer title. How can health be discovered? Surely, you will say, health is a thing which people do or do not possess according to whether they are born with strong and healthy bodies or bodies which are weak and ailing?

This, of course, is true to a certain extent, yet not altogether true. A strong healthy body is an invaluable gift, but it is not enough. Healthy children and strong men fall ill when weaker ones in other circumstances escape, and so the question arises, on what does health depend, what is it which keeps the human body fit and well?

"Good food and plenty of it," you will reply. Again this is partly true. Good food is necessary to health; yet, strange to say, there is more ill-health caused by overeating than by anything else, and there is almost as much illness among the rich as among the poor. Actually, indeed, the healthiest boys and girls are often found in uncivilized, savage races who dwell among dirty, unsanitary surroundings, and

who live on raw fruits and vegetables, milk, whole-meal flour, and—probably because they cannot obtain it—very little meat.

So again the question arises, on what does good health depend? It is not a new question. More than a century ago men were asking it of each other, for they realized how important it was that they should find an answer, and now and then they made important discoveries, discoveries which more often than not they were quite unable to understand.

One of these discoveries was made by the great explorer, Captain Cook. In those days thousands of strong, healthy seamen died every year of a terrible disease called scurvy, and it was thought that the illness was brought on by the constant diet of salt meat. Actually this was not the cause, and during the course of his voyages Captain Cook discovered that sailors who had plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables to eat escaped the dread complaint, while the crews of other ships, not so provided, suffered severely.

Here was a discovery of first-rate importance, and presently all ships bound on long voyages were taking a supply of dried fruits and vegetables as part of their rations. But, strange to relate, these dried fruits and vegetables failed to fulfill their purpose. Whereas the crews of those ships which made frequent calls, and were able to lay in supplies of fresh greenstuff at different ports continued in good health, the crews supplied with dried vegetables still suffered from scurvy. So here at once was another prob-



lem. Evidently it was not the vegetables or fruit which kept the sailors well, but something contained in the vegetables and fruit, something, moreover, which the process of drying destroyed.

What 'could this mysterious something be? For years men of science studied the question of food, and gradually they discovered that all edible things belonged to one or more of five classes, namely, carbohydrates, fats, proteins, mineral salts and water. Moreover, they further discovered that a human being could not live solely on one or two of these classes of food and remain healthy, but that a sound body depended upon a proper quantity of each of these different kinds of food being consumed each day.

For in the course of their studies the scientists learned that each class of food had its special duty to perform in building up the human body. The human body is very like an engine. It requires fuel to keep it going, and in the list of foods those belonging to the carbohydrate class are the fuels of the human engine, for they supply warmth and also the energy which enables boys and girls to play strenuous games. So the carbohydrates, which consist of starch and sugar, and which are found in such foods as wheat, rice, honey, potatoes, bananas, fruits and vegetables, are a very important class, and the boy and girl who wants to keep fit must eat plenty of these energizing foods.

The second class of food is fats. It is found in lard, butter, dripping, olive oil, and it is this class of food

which makes people grow. The proteins, as the third class of food is called, supply the building materials of the body. This class contains such foods as milk and eggs, fish, chicken, beans and lentils, and the duty of these foods is to build up the materials of the human body and keep the tissues in good condition. Next come the mineral salts which are found in meat, fish, vegetables and fruits, and which, by dissolving into the fluids of the body, help to keep the various organs in good working order. The mineral matter also helps to build up the bones, while the fifth class, water, is found in almost all foods, and is indispensable to good health.

Of course all this was not discovered in a day. Indeed, it took a long time to find out all there was to be known about these different classes of food and what they did for human beings, but having completed their studies scientists may for a time have thought that they had learned all there was to know about food. After all, if it was known exactly what each kind of food did for the human body, then surely it must be possible to work out the perfect diet for good health. But for some reason this did not prove so easy as might be imagined. The most carefully arranged diet did not always promote the bodily health expected, and very soon the scientific men came to the conclusion that there was still something to be found out, that instead of coming to the end of their discoveries they were only half-way.

So once more the work of exploration began.

What was this unknown something in food which did people good, and the lack of which caused them to be weak and ailing? Why did people deprived of fresh fruit and vegetables for a long time always contract scurvy, and why did they recover immediately they were given fresh green food to eat? These and hundreds of other questions the clever men asked themselves as they pondered over the matter, and then, at last, in 1912 a discovery was made which opened the door to a whole wonderland of fresh knowledge.

What was this discovery? It was the discovery in certain natural foods of tiny substances, substances so incredibly minute that they could not be seen, tasted or smelt, but on which the whole health of mankind depended. Food in which one or more of these mysterious substances were present did the consumer good. Food from which the substances were absent was more or less waste matter and might as well never have been eaten. Moreover it was further discovered that to partake of these substances resulted in good health, while the absence of them from the daily diet led to disease and sickness.

Here was a discovery indeed! At last the very essence of food had been discovered, and because the very life of the world depended on these substances they were called *Vitamins* from the Latin word "vita" which means "life."

Nowadays a great deal more is known about vitamins than was known even a few years ago.

So far six vitamins have been discovered, one or more of which are present in most foodstuffs, and these vitamins have been named after the letters of the alphabet and are known as Vitamins A, B<sub>1</sub>, B<sub>2</sub>, C, D, and E. Moreover, it is now known in what foods these vital vitamins are to be found, and just how they help the consumer to build up a strong healthy body, so that their discovery can truly be called the discovery of health.

No doubt the reader will wish to know what these tiny substances called vitamins do, and in what foods they are found. Starting at the beginning, Vitamin A promotes good eyesight, helps young children to a strong healthy growth, and makes the consumer more immune from illnesses, especially illnesses which arise from germs. What a great deal for a tiny, scentless, tasteless, invisible substance to do. But it does it all nevertheless, and this precious vitamin is found in kidney, liver, egg yolk, butter, fish roe, and many other tasty foods.

Next in the list is Vitamin B<sub>1</sub>. This vitamin is present in wholemeal bread, yeast, vegetables such as carrots and turnips, lentils, oatmeal, liver, heart and brains, and besides being necessary for the healthy growth of young babies, Vitamin B<sub>1</sub> gives the consumer strong nerves and healthy appetite. B<sub>1</sub> is also a cure for an eastern disease called beriberi, and which resembles dropsy.

Vitamin B<sub>2</sub> is also a cure for diseases, though in this case the diseases are skin diseases. Before B<sub>2</sub> was discovered many people in Italy and the United

States of America were either driven insane or died from a horrible skin disease called pellagara, but nowadays a patient suffering from this disease is given substances containing Vitamin B<sub>2</sub> to consume and stands a very good chance of recovery. B<sub>2</sub> is present in fish, cheese, the lean of meat, yeast, eggs, milk, dried peas and beans.

Now comes the famous Vitamin C. This was the vitamin which Captain Cook took on board his ship when he laid in stores of fresh fruit and vegetables and so kept his sailors free from scurvy. It was the lack of this vitamin which caused the sailors of olden times to die by thousands of that dread disease, but nowadays, thanks to superior knowledge, people rarely suffer from it. Vitamin C is found in raw green vegetables, raspberries, blackberries, apples and many other fruits, raw milk and boiled potatoes, and besides keeping people free from scurvy it preserves the consumer's blood in good condition.

In this wonderful family of health no member is more interesting than Vitamin D. It is present in cod liver oil, milk, cheese, butter, egg yolk, fish roe and fat, but unlike its companions it is also produced by sunlight. That is why sun-bathing is so good for people. The sunlight, or more correctly speaking the ultra-violet rays in sunlight, shining on the bare bodies of the bathers actually build up this precious vitamin in their blood, and this is one reason why people feel so much better after a holiday, or in sunny weather, than they do in the sunless, winter days. Vitamin D can also be produced by sunlamps,

and people who bathe their bodies regularly in the light from these lamps during the winter months suffer much less from the lack of sunshine than do their less fortunate neighbours. Children especially benefit from Vitamin D, for it prevents rickets, and tooth decay, and helps them to grow strong, healthy bones.

Last in the Vitamin family comes Vitamin E. This is the friend of little babies, for it aids their growth and life before they are born, and it is found in the green leaves of lettuces, meat, eggs, and the oil of the wheat germs.

Vitamins are very wonderful substances, but they become a thousand times more wonderful when it is realized how incredibly small are the quantities necessary to maintain health. Thus if it were possible to divide 1 ounce of pure Vitamin D into 1,000,000 equal parts, each one of those 1,000,000 parts would be a sufficient daily dose to keep a little child free from rickets. Or, to give another instance. If all the Vitamin D present in 20 gallons of milk could be gathered together it might just equal in size the full stop which ends this story.

#### NOTES

**Captain Cook** (1728-79) was one of the greatest explorers of the eighteenth century. Most of his work was done in the South Seas and Australia.

He is equally famous for his humane attitude to his men at a time when service in the Navy was notoriously harsh. He was the first ship's captain to discover the value of fresh fruit and vegetables as a preventive against scurvy. It was only after his time that people began to realise that a proper diet on board ship is important.

Captain Cook met his death at the hands of South Sea Islanders.

**dripping**: fat derived from roasting meat.

**olive oil**: oil derived from the olive fruit. This is the chief source of fat among the Mediterranean peoples.

**beri-beri**: a disease which is prevalent in certain parts of India. It has been noticed that it occurs where people are in the habit of eating polished rice from which all trace of the outer husk (which contains Vitamin B<sub>1</sub>) has been removed.

**rickets**: a disease which leads to the weakening of the joints and limbs in children. A very common disease in India where malnutrition is prevalent.

### EXERCISES

1. What was the discovery made by Captain Cook and why was it so important?

2. Say what a vitamin is and show what part our knowledge of these substances ought to play in regulating our diet.

3. What happens to us if we do not obtain the proper vitamins in our food?

4. Show that the following words can be used both as nouns and verbs and indicate any differences in pronunciation brought about by such a change:

dread, call, fruit, sound, diet, contract, present, benefit.

5. Combine the following groups of sentences each into one non-simple sentence:

(a) The sailors had plenty of fresh vegetables. These did not suffer from scurvy. Other ships did not provide these things. Their crews suffered from scurvy. Captain Cook discovered these things.

(b) Everyone wishes to be healthy. They must eat proper food in order to be healthy. They must eat food which gives them energy.

(c) Vitamin E helps the growth of children. It is found in the leaves of green vegetables and other substances. On the other hand, Vitamin D can be obtained from the rays of the sun.

### III

#### LEO TOLSTOY

LEO TOLSTOY (1828-1910) was one of the greatest Russian writers of the nineteenth century. Although he belonged to a wealthy family of aristocratic landowners, his sympathies were entirely on the side of the depressed peasant classes. His writings did much to bring to the notice of the world the state of affairs in Russia and he was among the group of writers whose works did a great deal to bring about the revolution of 1917.

In this story Tolstoy shows what are the consequences of greed. Pokhom is typical of the Russian peasants who, like the peasantry of other countries, always suffered from an intense 'land-hunger'. We see how his greed brought about his ultimate downfall. The story, of course is a parable.

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#### HOW MUCH LAND DOES A MAN REQUIRE

THE elder sister, who had married a shopkeeper in town, was paying a visit to her younger sister, a peasant's wife. While drinking tea, she boasted of the life she led in town; according to her, she lived at her ease, always wore pretty clothes, and even her children were neat and trim; she only ate and drank what she liked, and, when she wanted amusement, she had the choice between a walk and the theatre.

The younger sister, somewhat piqued, retorted by disparaging the lot of a shopkeeper and vaunting that of a peasant.

'You make a great mistake if you imagine I would ever change places with you,' she declared. 'Our life here may be dull, but, at least, it is not always poisoned by the dread of to-morrow. You are well off one day and perhaps a beggar the next, whereas



we, if we are never likely to be rich, can always count on a crust of bread.'

'Yes,' sneered the other, 'like the pigs and the calves. However diligently your husband may work, you will never know what it is to feel at your ease. You were born in squalor....you will live and die in squalor, and it will be the same with your children.'

Pokhom, the husband of the younger sister, reclined on the top of the stove and gave an idle ear to the women's chatter.

'All that is true enough,' he reflected. 'Our one trouble is that we have not all the land we need. Ah! if only I had sufficient land, not even the Devil himself could frighten me.'

The women finished their tea, tidied up, and went to bed.

Not a word of what had been said had escaped the ears of the Devil, who was crouching behind the stove. Nothing could please him better than to hear Pokhom declare that if only he had enough land he could defy the Devil himself.

'So be it, my fine fellow,' he chuckled to himself. 'You and I must thresh this out together. I will give you plenty of land, and that is precisely how I will get at you.'

Pokhom's wish was soon gratified. First, by dint of much scraping and pinching, he was able to buy a respectable slice of an adjoining property. Increased responsibilities brought new troubles, but, on the whole, he was fairly satisfied.

Then one day he put a peasant up for the night, and his visitor told him about some wonderful land near the Volga; not only did it produce enormous crops almost without being scratched, but it was wonderfully cheap. Pokhom was electrified. He forthwith sold his present little holding and set out for the land of promise.

The place proved all that he had been led to expect. But here, too, fresh troubles arose. The chief grievance was the insufficiency of suitable land for corn, and Pokhom was compelled to rent some more. However, his industry and a succession of good harvests enabled him, five years later, to put by a little money.

He was just on the point of purchasing from a ruined neighbour the very land he needed to round off his property when something intervened. A passing stranger, a merchant, happened to talk about the wonderful country of the Bashkirs, where, for a thousand roubles—the exact sum Pokhom had at his disposal—he, the merchant, had acquired five thousand acres of magnificent land.

‘All you need do,’ he assured Pokhom, ‘is to make friends with the elders. I presented them with a few dressing-gowns and carpets and a chest of tea and gave them a drink of wine all round. The land cost me less than sixpence an acre.’

He produced the deed of sale of the land, which, he said, was a plain covered with grass and traversed by a river.

‘There is so much of this good land,’ continued

the stranger, enthusiastically, 'that you could not walk round it in a whole year. It all belongs to the Bashkirs, and they are as silly as a lot of sheep. If you liked, you could almost get the land from them for nothing.'

Once more Pokhom's imagination took fire. He decided to keep his money in his pocket. Heaven only knows how much land he might be able to extort from the Bashkirs for the sum he was going to hand to his ruined neighbour, as a first instalment on a few hundred acres.

He ascertained full particulars as to the best way of reaching the Bashkirs' country, and immediately got ready for the journey. The care of his house he entrusted to his wife, and, taking only one companion, he set out for the neighbouring town. There he purchased the articles mentioned by the stranger—several dressing-gowns and carpets, a chest of tea, and some wine. After that, the two men started on their journey in the cart.

They travelled on and on, and at the end of a week, after covering over three hundred miles, they came to a Bashkir camp.

No sooner had they noticed Pokhom's approach than all the Bashkirs left their tents and surrounded the new-comer. An interpreter was fortunately at hand, and Pokhom was able to make himself understood. He explained that the object of his visit was to obtain some land.

The Bashkirs gave him a most cordial welcome and conducted him to the best tent, where he was

made to sit on a pile of soft cushions spread upon silk carpets. He was offered tea and koumiss. A sheep was killed in his honour, and all the titbits were put aside for him.

Pokhom bade his servant fetch the presents from the cart and he gave them to his hosts, distributing tea and wine to each of them.

The Bashkirs seemed highly pleased and they held a long consultation, at the end of which they told the interpreter to translate their decision to Pokhom.

'I am to tell you,' began the interpreter, 'that they feel very friendly disposed towards you. It is our custom to treat strangers to the best of our ability and to return presents for presents. You have only to declare what pleases you most here and to take it in return for your gifts.'

'What pleases me more than anything else,' replied Pokhom, 'is your land. There is not sufficient land in my country; moreover, the little land we do possess does not yield us a big enough return. You, on the other hand, have a lot of it, and it is very good land. I have never seen any land to compare with it.'

The interpreter duly translated this. Again the Bashkirs deliberated. Pokhom could not understand a word they said, but he gathered that they were very much amused, for they spoke and laughed boisterously.

Finally they grew silent, and once more the interpreter spoke.

‘They tell me to let you know that, in recognition of your generosity, they are willing to give you as much land as you like.’

‘What does he mean by saying that I can have as much land as I like?’ pondered Pokhom. ‘I want the transaction to be done properly. Otherwise, after I have been granted this or that land, somebody may come along and take it away from me again.’

‘I am very much obliged to you for your offer, your most generous offer,’ he said, aloud, turning to the elders. ‘You own a great deal of land, I know, but I do not ask you to give me very much. I do, however, want to know exactly what you propose to give me. I want to have the boundaries pegged out and everything put on a proper business footing, for we are all, every one of us, mortal. Were things not arranged as I suggest, your children might want to take away from me what you, in the goodness of your heart, have given me.’

‘Very well,’ laughed the chief elder. ‘The transaction shall be carried through in accordance with rules.’

‘And the price?’ asked Pokhom. ‘Let me know now how much I shall have to pay.’

‘We have only one price: a thousand roubles a day.’

To fix the price of land at so much a day took Pokhom by surprise. He was unable to make any immediate answer. At last he asked: ‘How many acres does that make?’

'It is quite impossible to say exactly beforehand. All the land you can walk round in a day will become your property. And the price for the day is a thousand roubles.'

In his bewilderment Pokhom could only retort:

'You can walk round a lot of land in a day.'

'No matter how much it is, it will all be yours, on one condition; by the end of the day, you must be back at the place you started from. Otherwise, your money will be forfeited.'

'Who will stake out the boundary as I pass along?' Pokhom asked.

'You yourself may select the places where you would like boundary stakes to be fixed. Some of our younger men shall accompany you on horseback, and, whenever you tell them to put in a stake it shall be done. After that, all the stakes will be joined up by a furrow made with a plough. You are free to allot to yourself just as much land as ever you like, provided, as I have already said, that you return to your starting-point before sunset.'

This seemed a very satisfactory arrangement to Pokhom. It was settled that he would start at dawn on the following day.

He drank tea and koumiss with his hosts and ate their mutton, after which he was given a feather bed, and everybody retired to rest.

Pokhom lay down on the feather bed, but he could not get the thought of the land out of his head. It kept him wide awake.

'I have not done so badly,' was his constant men-

tal refrain. 'I mean to carve out a regular little kingdom for myself. At this season a day is almost as long as a year. I can easily cover more than thirty miles. Thirty miles! At last I shall be my own master....I shall no longer be dependent on anyone. I can buy oxen for two ploughs, hire a couple of labourers, cultivate the best part of the land and let the cattle graze on the rest.'

Thus, restless and wakeful, Pokhom passed the entire night. Only shortly before dawn did he fall into a fitful slumber. And then he had a dream.

In his dream he was still in the same tent. Shouts of laughter reached him from outside. Curious to see what was happening, he jumped up and went out. In front of the tent sat the chief elder, his hands crossed on his stomach. He was shaking with laughter.

'What is amusing you so much?' Pokhom asked, advancing towards him.

Suddenly Pokhom realised that the man before him was not the chief elder of the Bashkirs, but the merchant who had told him of the wonderful land in the steppes. He was on the point of asking him for the latest news, when he discovered that he had made another mistake. The man was not the merchant at all, but the peasant whom he once put up for the night and who had told him about the good land to be had near the Volga. But no sooner did he recognise him than the peasant, in turn, disappeared, and in his place, right in front of Pokhom's eyes, sat the Devil himself, with cloven hoofs and

horns on the forehead. Staring very hard at something, he laughed as though his sides were going to split.

‘What can he be looking at so fixedly?’ wondered Pokhom; ‘and why is he so amused?’

Drawing still nearer, Pokhom suddenly started, then remained motionless. What is this? On the ground, quite close to him, a man was lying. He had nothing on except a shirt and a pair of trousers, and his feet were bare. He was stretched out on his back, face upwards, and his face was as white as chalk.

Pokhom gazed at the figure attentively and.... recognised himself. With a cry of dismay he awakened.

‘What extraordinary things one does dream!’ he exclaimed half aloud, and was on the point of going to sleep again, when he noticed the first streaks of dawn.

‘Time the others were up,’ he muttered; ‘they ought to be setting out already.’

Pokhom got up and went to arouse his servant. He told him to harness the horses and call the Bashkirs.

Hardly any time elapsed before the Bashkirs were assembled, the chief elder among them. They pressed Pokhom to take koumiss and tea, but he was far too impatient to start.

‘It is high time we were off,’ he said. ‘Let us get away at once.’

The little procession started; some of the Bashkirs



rode, others drove in carts. Pokhom, of course, was in his own cart with his man. The steppes were soon reached.

Just before the sun peeped above the horizon they halted on the summit of a small hillock. The Bashkirs dismounted. Approaching Pokhom, the chief elder stretched out his arm and, with extended forefinger, pointed to the wide-spreading plains before them.

‘All that belongs to us,’ he said. ‘Everything your eye can take in. Make your choice.’

In Pokhom’s eyes there was a sudden gleam. Right away to the distant horizon the land extended, luxuriant with grass, flat as the palm of his hand, dark as poppy-seed. Herbage of every description, some of it is as high as a man, indicated the hollows.

The chief elder took off his fur cap and placed it on the ground, on the very summit of the hill.

‘Here,’ he said, ‘is the mark. Your servant shall remain beside it. Put your money in the hat. From here you must start and here you must return. All the land included in the circuit you will make becomes your property.’

Pokhom took the thousand roubles from his pocket and placed the money in the cap. Then he removed his outer cloak, retaining his caftan, and tightened his waistband. He had provided himself with a little dried grain contained in a small bag, and a gourd full of water was slung over his shoulders. When he had given his boots a final hitch he was quite ready to start.

A minute or two he stood lost in reflection. Which direction ought he to take? The land looked equally good everywhere.

Finally he decided to go east, as there was no obvious reason for him to take to the right rather than to the left.

He looked at the sky, stretched his limbs, and waited for the sun to rise.

‘I must not lose any time,’ he reflected. ‘Walking is less trying during the cool hours of the morning. I must take every advantage I can.’

He was soon in the very heart of the steppes, the horsemen following him.

He decided to maintain an even pace, neither too quick nor too slow. At the end of the first mile a stake was put in. Then on again. As his legs grew accustomed to the exercise he somewhat increased his pace.

He kept on steadily, walking, walking, walking. After what he estimated to be another mile he ordered another stake to be fixed. He glanced behind him. The hill, lit up by the full glow of the rising sun, stood out clearly. The little group of Bashkirs on the summit was plainly distinguishable.

By the time Pokhom had covered about three miles he decided to remove his caftan. The day promised to be warm; already the heat was trying. He gave his waistband another hitch and walked on for another three miles.

The heat was now oppressive. Pokhom raised his eyes to the sun and realised it was time he broke his

fast.

'Here I am,' he mused, 'at the end of the first quarter of my day. There are four such parts in a day. It is not yet time to turn. I think, though, it will be better if I remove my boots.'

He sat down, took off his boots, and once more resumed his march.

'Another three miles or so and I will then turn left. The land about here is far too good to be left out. The farther I go, in fact, the better the land seems to become.'

And so Pokhom kept straight ahead. After a time he felt again the impulse to glance behind him. This time the hill was barely visible. As for the Bashkirs on the top of it, they resembled a group of ants rather than men.

'Ah!' sighed Pokhom, 'I have got something like a bit of land now! But I must really decide to turn.'

Sweat was pouring down his face, and he felt very thirsty. Still walking, he took a long draught out of his gourd. Then he told the Bashkirs to fix another stake, and turned sharply to the left.

On went Pokhom in the new direction. The grass was high and thick, and the heat intense, Pokhom was beginning to feel very tired. He glanced upward at the sun. It was time he had dinner. A short rest would do him good. He stopped, opened his bag, and ate, standing.

'If I were to sit down,' he reflected, 'I should be tempted to stretch myself out at full length, and I am so weary that I should certainly fall asleep.'

And so he remained standing where he was for a few minutes. Then, drawing a deep breath, he was off again.

The food had invigorated him and at first he went ahead with comparative ease. But the heat had become well-nigh unbearable, and his desire to sleep was almost invincible. Pokhom was really tired out. To gain courage he muttered to himself the proverb: 'An hour's suffering for a century of joy.'

He managed to cover another four miles. Then, as he was on the point of turning once more to the left, he was struck by the wonderfully luxuriant look of the hollow straight ahead.

'It will never do to leave that out of my domain. What a crop of flax I shall have there!'

He continued to advance. He must have that hollow at all costs.

A stake was fixed on the other side of it, and then Pokhom turned.

Once more he looked towards the hill. The little group of Bashkirs could now be discerned only with difficulty. Ten miles, at least, separated Pokhom from them.

'I have made the first two sides rather long,' he said; 'this side must be shorter.'

His pace, in spite of his weariness, was now considerably increased. The sun was nearing the horizon; very soon, now, it would reach the end of its day's journey. Yet Pokhom had covered little more than a mile of the third side. He was still a good ten miles away from his goal.

'There is no help for it,' he sighed. 'I must make straight for the hill now. My land will be a very queer shape, but that cannot be helped. I shall have quite sufficient.'

He set his face towards the goal.

Straight for the hill went Pokhom. His distress was great. His feet, swollen and bruised, were horribly painful, and his limbs gave way under him. Much as he would have enjoyed a rest, the briefest halt was now quite out of the question. 'What will become of me if I do not reach the goal before the appointed time? How far have I still to go? If only my feet did not ache so! Is it possible I am going to lose both my money and my toil?'

One more effort, Pokhom! Attempt to achieve the impossible!

And now, Pokhom began to run. His feet were bleeding, but that did not stay him. On, on, he raced! And still the goal lay far ahead. He removed the gourd, threw away cap and boots.

'Alas!' he lamented, 'greed has been my undoing. Never, never, can I reach the goal before the sun goes down.'

The dread of this almost suffocated him. He was unable to take a deep breath. Still he continued to run. His mouth was parched; his shirt and trousers, soaked with sweat, were clinging to him. His chest rose and fell like a blacksmith's bellows, his heart was pounding hard. No longer could he feel his feet. His ankles were giving way. He was done for!

The land and everything else were forgotten. His

sole dread now was that he might drop down dead from sheer exhaustion.

And Pokhom was very frightened of death.

As he raced along, Pokhom was saying to himself, 'think what a hopeless fool you will appear if you stop running now!'

He could actually hear the Bashkirs whistling and shouting, and this made him still more determined not to give in.

Putting forth all his strength, he made a final effort. The goal was quite near, but the sun was getting lower and lower.

Each man could be seen now on the top of the hill. Everybody was making signs to him to hurry. He could even see the cap on the ground containing the money. The chief elder was squatting beside it, his hands folded over his stomach. And, quite suddenly, Pokhom recollected his dream.

'I shall have all the land I want, that is clear,' he mused, 'but will Heaven allow me to live on it? It is I alone who have been the cause of my undoing.'

And still he continued to run. He raised his eyes to the sun. The great red disc was almost touching the earth. Now it had actually touched it. Another brief moment and the bottom half of it was hidden. Then, just as Pokhom, running all the time, reached the hill, the last glowing crescent slipped out of sight.

With a cry of despair, Pokhom told himself that all was lost. No; there was still a last chance! He suddenly realised that, though the sun might be gone for him at the bottom of the hill, it must still be visi-

ble for those on the summit!

Putting forth all that he had left of vitality, he bounded up the slope.

There is the cap! Victory!

He lost his footing and slipped, but as he fell his outstretched hands touched the cap.

'Bravo! Bravo!' shouted the chief elder of the Bashkirs. 'You have gained a fine estate.'

Pokhom's servant rushed forward; he wanted to assist his master to rise, but he noticed a little stream of blood trickling from his mouth.

Pokhom was dead!

The chief elder, squatting on the ground, his hands crossed on his stomach, burst out laughing. Then, rising, he took a spade and threw it towards Pokhom's servant.

'Take this and dig a grave for him.'

The Bashkirs mounted their horses and rode away, leaving the servant with his master's body.

And the servant, all by himself, dug a hole six feet deep, and the exact length of the body. In that hole he buried Pokhom.

## NOTES

**trim** : tidy.

**piqued** : annoyed.

**disparaging** : commenting unfavourably on.

**vaunting** : boasting of.

**diligently** : carefully.

**squalor** : poverty.

**thresh this out** : decide the matter. A metaphor from threshing corn.

**scraping and pinching** : economising.

**to put by** : save.

**rouble** : the Russian unit of coinage formerly worth 10 annas.

**deed of sale :** a legal document showing that the buying and selling of land or other property has been carried out legally.

**koumiss :** an alcoholic drink.

### EXERCISES

1. What did Pokhom's wife think of the advantages of a peasant's life? Did her husband agree with her? Show how the story commences from this point:

2. What was happening to Pokhom all the time that he was buying land and increasing his wealth?

3. Show (a) what the Bashkirs said was the price of their land and (b) what it really was.

4. Who were the Bashkirs and why did they laugh at Pokhom's death? What does Tolstoy intend us to understand from this story?

5. Give in your own words the meaning of Pokhom's dream.

6. Use the following words in sentences of your own, showing that you understand their meaning thoroughly:

cover (noun & verb); holding (noun); peg (noun & verb); return (noun & verb); hollow (noun); pace (noun & verb).

7. Analyse the following sentences:

(a) All you need to do is to make friends with the elders.

(b) No sooner had they noticed Pokhom's approach than all the Bashkirs left their tents.

(c) However diligently your husband may work, you will never know what it is to feel at your ease.



## IV

### MARK TWAIN

MARK TWAIN (1835-1910). In private life he bore the name of Samuel L. Clemens and was one of the most distinguished American writers of his time. Most of his work is humorous in character although he himself hoped to be remembered for his serious historical and biographical studies. Nevertheless, he will always be thought of as one of the greatest humorists in the English language and it is unlikely that a time will come when his works will cease to be read. His most famous works are *The Innocents Abroad* (the story of a visit to Europe in the days before the American tourist was common) and *Huckleberry Finn*, the story of a poor boy and his adventures on and near the Mississippi river.

Mark Twain's greatest characteristic is the humour which he seems to find in any subject however unlikely it appears to the ordinary observer. Here he finds it in the ordinary Indian crow a bird which we all know so well but which we do not ordinarily find a matter for humour or even for ordinary interest.

Mark Twain took his pen-name from the cry of the men on the river steamers on the Mississippi. When they were measuring the depth of the water, they dropped a weighted line into the water and when it reached a depth of twelve feet, they called out "Mark Twain" (second mark).

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### THE INDIAN CROW

By midnight I had suffered all the different kinds of shocks there are, and knew that I could never more be disturbed by them, either isolated or in combination. Then came peace—stillness deep and solemn—and lasted till five.

Then it all broke loose again. And who re-started it? The Bird of Birds—the Indian crow. I came to know him well, by and by, and be infatuated with him. I suppose he is the hardest lot that wears

feathers. Yes, and the cheerfullest, and the best satisfied with himself. He never arrived at what he is by any careless process, or any sudden one; he is a work of art, and 'art is long'; he is the product of immemorial ages; and of deep calculation; one can't make a bird like that in a day. He has been reincarnated more times than Shiva; and he has kept a sample of each incarnation, and fused it into his constitution. In the course of his evolutionary promotions, his sublime march toward ultimate perfection, he has been a gambler, a low comedian, a dissolute priest, a fussy woman, a blackguard, a scoffer, a liar, a thief, a spy, an informer, a trading politician, a swindler, a professional hypocrite, a patriot for cash, a reformer, a lecturer, a lawyer, a conspirator, a rebel, a royalist, a democrat, a practiser and propagator of irreverence, a meddler, an intruder, a busy-body, an infidel, and a wallower in sin for the mere love of it. The strange result, the incredible result, of this patient accumulation of all damnable traits is, that he does not know what care is, he does not know what sorrow is, he does not know what remorse is, his life is one long thundering ecstasy of happiness, and he will go to his death untroubled, knowing that he will soon turn up again as an author or something, and be even more intolerably capable and comfortable than ever he was before.

In his straddling wide forward-step, and his springy sidewise series of hops, and his impudent air, and his cunning way of canting his head to one

side upon occasion, he reminds one of the American blackbird. But the sharp resemblances stop there. He is much bigger than the blackbird; and he lacks the blackbird's trim and slender and beautiful build and shapely beak; and of course his sober garb of grey and rusty black is a poor and humble thing compared with the splendid lustre of the blackbird's metallic sables and shifting and flashing bronze glories. The blackbird is a perfect gentleman, in deportment and attire, and is not noisy, I believe, except when holding religious services and political conventions in a tree; but this Indian sham Quaker is just a rowdy, and is always noisy when awake—always chaffing, scolding, scoffing, laughing, ripping and cursing and carrying on about something or other. I never saw such a bird for delivering opinions. Nothing escapes him; he notices everything that happens, and brings out his opinion about it, particularly if it is a matter that is none of his business. And it is never a mild opinion, but always violent—violent and profane—the presence of ladies does not affect him. His opinions are not the outcome of reflection, for he never thinks about anything, but heaves out any opinion that is on top in his mind, and which is often an opinion about some quite different thing and does not fit the case. But that is his way; his main idea is to get out an opinion, and if he stopped to think he would lose chances.

I suppose he has no enemies among men. The whites and Mohammedans never seemed to molest

him; and the Hindoos, because of their religion, never take the life of any creature, but spare even the snakes and tigers and fleas and rats. If I sat on one end of the balcony, the crows would gather on the railing at the other end and talk about me; and edge closer, little by little, till I could almost reach them; and they would sit there, in the most unabashed way, and talk about my clothes, and my hair, and my complexion, and my probable character and vocation and politics, and how I came to be in India, and what I had been doing, and how many days I had got for it, and how I had happened to go unhanged so long, and when would it probably come off, and might there be more of my sort where I came from, and when would *they* be hanged,—and so on, and so on, until I could no longer endure the embarrassment of it; then I would shoo them away, and they would circle around in the air a little while, laughing and deriding and mocking, and presently settle on the rail and do it all over again.

They were very sociable when there was anything to eat—oppressively so. With a little encouragement they would come in and light on the table and help me eat my breakfast; and once when I was in the other room and they found themselves alone, they carried off everything they could lift; and they were particular to choose things which they could make no use of after they got them. In India their number is beyond estimate, and their noise is in proportion.

#### NOTES

the hardest lot: (slang, compare a bad lot), someone who cannot be improved or reformed.

**art is long :** from a Latin proverb which says that life is short but art is long.

**blackguard :** (pronounce, blaggard) a rascal.

**propagator of irreverence :** one who encourages others to be irreverent.

**straddling :** with legs stretched wide apart.

**damnable :** worthy of condemnation.

**conventions :** meetings.

**Quaker :** an English religious sect which practises silence in its worship and wears for preference black or grey clothes. The crow is a sham Quaker because although he wears black and looks very grave, he is, in fact, a noisy rascal.

**ripping :** swearing (American slang).

**how many days . . . :** how many days imprisonment.

**deriding :** from a Latin word meaning "laughing at".

### EXERCISES

1. How does Mark Twain regard the Indian Crow and how does this make the bird a suitable subject for a humorous essay?

2. Describe another common Indian bird from the same point of view as the author adopts towards the crow.

3. Do you know any other author who often writes of animals as though they have human characters? Tell in your own words one of his stories.

4. Explain in your own words the meaning of the following expressions:

an informer; a gambler; a busy-body; carry on about something; none of his business; a scoffer.

5. (a) Derive adjectives from the following nouns:

peace, incarnation, priest, democrat, lustre;

(b) Turn the following adjectives into nouns:

capable, impudent, noisy, probable, particular;

(c) Give the adverbial forms of the following words:

probable, noisy, cheerful, careless, intolerable.

## V

### OLIVER GOLDSMITH

OLIVER GOLDSMITH (1728-74) is today considered to be one of the best writers of prose in his period. He was the contemporary and friend of such men as Johnson, Burke and Boswell.

In addition to his novel 'The Vicar of Wakefield' he wrote many miscellaneous essays. 'The Misfortunes of Poverty' comes from one of these series.

As a prose-writer, Goldsmith is distinguished by his simplicity of style and gentle, humorous satire, qualities which appeal to us also in his two great poems 'The Traveller' and 'The Deserted Village'. He was very successful with his two great comedies 'The Goodnatured Man' and 'She Stoops to Conquer', both of which are still often performed.

The following essay shows something of his powers of observation and his feeling for the miseries of the poor. He gains our sympathy for the poor ex-sailor, not by emphasizing his misfortunes, but by causing his subject to make light of them. The date of the events described is roughly 1750-70 when England was at war with France.

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#### THE MISFORTUNES OF POVERTY

THE misfortunes of the great, my friend, are held up to engage our attention, are enlarged upon in tones of declamation, and the world is called upon to gaze at the noble sufferers: they have at once the comfort of admiration and pity.

Yet where is the magnanimity of bearing misfortunes when the whole world is looking on? Men in such circumstances can act bravely even from motives of vanity. He only who, in the vale of obscurity, can brave adversity, who without friends to encourage, acquaintances to pity, or even without hope to alleviate his distresses, can behave with tranquillity and indifference, is truly great; whether peasant or courtier, he deserves admiration, and should

be held up for our imitation and respect. The miseries of the poor are, however, entirely disregarded; though some undergo more real hardships in one day than the great in their whole lives.

With what indignation do I hear the heroes of tragedy complain of misfortunes and hardships, whose greatest calamity is founded in arrogance and pride! Their severest distresses are pleasures, compared to what many of the adventuring poor every day sustain without murmuring. These may eat, drink and sleep, have slaves to attend them, and are sure of subsistence for life; while many of their fellow-creatures are obliged to wander, without a friend to comfort or to assist them, find enmity in every law, and are too poor to obtain even justice.

I have been led into these reflections from accidentally meeting, some days ago, a poor fellow begging at one of the outlets of this town, with a wooden leg. I was curious to learn what had reduced him to his present situation; and, after giving him what I thought proper, desired to know the history of his life and misfortunes, and the manner in which he was reduced to his present distress. The disabled soldier, for such he was, with an intrepidity truly British, leaning on his crutch, put himself into an attitude to comply with my request, and gave me his history as follows:—

“As for misfortunes, sir, I cannot pretend to have gone through more than others. Except the loss of my limb, and my being obliged to beg, I don’t know any reason, thank Heaven, that I have to com-

plain. There are some who have lost both legs and an eye; but, thank Heaven, it is not quite so bad with me.

“My father was a labourer in the country, and died when I was five years old; so I was put upon the parish. As he had been a wandering sort of a man, the parishioners were not able to tell to what parish I belonged, or where I was born; so they sent me to another parish, and that parish sent me to a third; till at last it was thought I belonged to no parish at all. At length, however, they fixed me. I had some disposition to be a scholar, and had actually learned my letters; but the master of the workhouse put me to business as soon as I was able to handle a mallet.

“Here I lived an easy kind of life for five years. I only wrought ten hours in the day, and had my meat and drink provided for my labour. It is true, I was not suffered to stir far from the house, for fear I should run away: but what of that? I had the liberty of the whole house, and the yard before the door, and that was enough for me.

“I was next bound out to a farmer, where I was up both early and late, but I ate and drank well, and liked my business well enough, till he died. Being then obliged to provide for myself, I was resolved to go and seek my fortune. Thus I lived, and went from town to town, working when I could get employment, and starving when I could get none, and might have lived so still; but happening one day to go through a field belonging to a magistrate



I spied a hare crossing the path just before me. I killed the hare, and was bringing it away in triumph, when the justice himself met me. He called me a villain, and collaring me, desired I would give an account of myself. I began immediately to give a full account of all that I knew of my breed and generation: but though I gave a very long account, the justice said I could give no account of myself; so I was indicted, and found guilty of being poor, and sent to Newgate, in order to be transported to the plantations.

“People may say this and that of being in jail; but, for my part, I found Newgate as agreeable a place as ever I was in in all my life. I had plenty to eat and drink, and did no work; but alas! this kind of life was too good to last for ever! I was taken out of prison, after five months, put on board a ship, and sent off with two hundred more. Our passage was but indifferent, for we were all confined in the hold, and died very fast, for want of sweet air and provisions; but for my part, I did not want meat, because I had a fever all the way. Providence was kind; when provisions grew short, it took away my desire of eating. When we came ashore, we were sold to the planters. I was bound for seven years, and as I was no scholar (for I had forgot my letters) I was obliged to work among the negroes, and served out my time as in duty bound to do.

“When my time was expired, I worked my passage home, and glad I was to see Old England again, because I loved my country. I was afraid, however,

that I should be indicted for a vagabond once more, so did not much care to go into the country, but kept about town, and did little jobs when I could get them. I was very happy in this manner for some time; till one evening, coming home from work, two men knocked me down, and then desired me to stand still. They belonged to a press-gang: I was carried before the justice, and as I could give no account of myself (that was the thing that always hobbled me), I had my choice left, whether to go on board a man-of-war, or list for a soldier. I chose to be a soldier; and in this post of a gentleman I served two campaigns, was at the battles of Flanders, and received but one wound through the breast, which is troublesome to this day.

“When the peace came on, I was discharged; and as I could not work, because my wound was sometimes painful, I listed for a landman in the East India Company’s service. I here fought the French in six pitched battles; and verily believe, that if I could read or write, our captain would have given me promotion, and made me a corporal. But that was not my good fortune. I soon fell sick, and when I became good-for-nothing, got leave to return home again with forty pounds in my pocket, which I saved in the service. This was at the beginning of the present war, so I hoped to be set on shore, and to have the pleasure of spending my money; but the government wanted men, and I was pressed again before ever I could set foot on shore.

“The boatswain found me, as he said, an obstinate

fellow: he swore that I understood my business perfectly well, but that I pretended sickness merely to be idle: God knows, I knew nothing of sea-business! He beat me without considering what he was about. But still my forty pounds was some comfort to me under every beating; and the money I might have had to this day, but that our ship was taken by the French, and so I lost it all!

“Our crew was carried into a French prison, and many of them died, because they were not used to live in a jail; but for my part it was nothing to me, for I was seasoned. One night, however, as I was sleeping on the bed of boards, with a warm blanket about me (for I always loved to lie well), I was awakened by the boatswain, who had a dark-lantern in his hand. ‘Jack,’ says he to me, ‘will you knock out the French sentry’s brains?’—‘I don’t care,’ says I, striving to keep myself awake, ‘if I lend a hand.’—‘Then follow me,’ says he, ‘and I hope we shall do business.’ So up I got, and tied my blanket, which was all the clothes I had, about my middle, and went with him to fight the Frenchmen. We had no arms; but one Englishman is able to beat five French at any time: so we went down to the door, where both the sentries were posted, and rushing upon them, seized their arms in a moment, and knocked them down. From thence, nine of us ran together to the quay, and, seizing the first boat we met, got out of the harbour, and put to sea. We had not been here three days before we were taken up by an English privateer, who was glad of so many good hands; and

we consented to run our chance. However, we had not so much luck as we expected. In three days we fell in with a French man-of-war, of forty guns, while we had but twenty-three; so to it we went. The fight lasted for three hours, and I verily believe we should have taken the Frenchman, but unfortunately we lost almost all our men just as we were going to get the victory. I was once more in the power of the French, and I believe it would have gone hard with me had I been brought back to my old jail in Brest; but by good fortune we were retaken, and carried to England once more.

"I had almost forgotten to tell you, that in this last engagement, I was wounded in two places: I lost four fingers of the left hand, and my leg was shot off. Had I the good fortune to have lost my leg and use of my hand on board a king's ship, and not a privateer, I should have been entitled to clothing and maintenance during the rest of my life, but that was not my chance. One man is born with a silver spoon in his mouth, and another with a wooden ladle. However, I enjoy good health, and have no enemy in this world that I know of."

Thus saying, he limped off, leaving my friend and me in an admiration of his intrepidity, and content; nor could we avoid acknowledging that an habitual acquaintance with misery is the truest school of fortitude and philosophy.

#### NOTES

**alleviate :** lighten.

**I was put upon the parish :** the Poor Laws stated that, when a child became destitute, it was to be brought

up at the expense of the town or village (parish) to which its parents belonged. When there was a doubt as to which parish a child belonged to, great hardship was inflicted as each parish endeavoured to shift the responsibility to another. Because of this the benevolent intentions of the Poor Law were often frustrated.

**they fixed me :** discovered the parish to which I belonged. When this was done, the child must be taught a useful trade.

**workhouse :** an institution in which paupers are fed, housed and given work.

**mallet :** a wooden hammer used by carpenters.

**I wrought only ten hours a day :** notice the irony; the child was made to work ten hours a day and was not allowed to leave the workhouse; yet he was quite happy.

**was bound out :** was sent as an apprentice.

**I killed the hare :** the Game Laws, which made it illegal for unauthorised people to kill certain birds and animals without a licence, were very severe and transportation for long periods was the penalty for their infringement.

**the justice :** the Justice of the Peace ; a magistrate.

**collaring me :** literally, taking me by the collar, hence taking me prisoner.

**indicted :** (pronounce : indited) charged with an offence against the law.

**found guilty of being poor :** Goldsmith uses his irony on the legal system of his time which was unfairly weighted against a poor person.

**Newgate :** the great London prison, now no longer in existence.

**hold :** the body of the ship, generally used for storing cargo and not a fit place for human beings to be kept in.

**worked my passage :** worked on board ship as a temporary member of the crew.

**indicted as a vagabond :** as a person with no settled abode.

**press-gang :** a body of men employed by the Government to compel men with no fixed work or abode to take service in the Navy as sailors.

**hobbled :** hindered me (literally, tied up my legs).

**list :** enlist.

**Flanders :** part of modern Belgium.

**landman :** a soldier.

**was pressed again :** this time he was made to join the Navy.

**seasoned :** accustomed to it.

**privateer :** a private armed vessel used for attacking enemy commerce.

consented to run our chance: agreed to enter the service of the owners of the privateer.

Brest: the great naval base in northern France.

### EXERCISES

1. Give in your own words an account of the adventures of the poor soldier.

2. What methods does Goldsmith use to gain our sympathy for the hero of his story? How far is he successful?

3. What do you gather of the life and manners of the people of Goldsmith's England from this essay?

4. "One man is born with a silver spoon in his mouth, and another with a wooden ladle". Explain this statement and illustrate your meaning.

5. Use the following words in sentences of your own, showing that you are well acquainted with their meaning: alleviate, arrogance, subsistence, campaign, season (verb), intrepidity, fortitude, expire, indict, disposition.

## VI

### C. A. KINCAID

THIS story is taken from a collection of Indian folk-tales called *Tales of Old Sind* by Mr. C. A. Kincaid, I.C.S. who is also the author of a number of other books of similar stories. These include *Deccan Nursery Tales*, *The Indian Heroes*, *Sri Krishna of Dwarka* and several others. Mr. Kincaid was formerly in the Bombay Judiciary and is well-known as an expert on the folk-lore of Western India.

This story has its origin in Sind but it is clear from its contents that it came originally from Rajputana, for it contains much that is typical of the heroic and romantic traditions of that chivalrous people. The part of the story which tells of the Princess dressing up as a man and winning fame as a warrior is common to many folk-stories, but the reason for her doing so is unusual and forms one of the chief attractions of the story.

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### BIRSING AND SUNDERBAI

ONCE upon a time there ruled in Sayla, a king, called Kesarising. He had a daughter, by name Sunderbai, who was her father's choicest treasure: for not only did she know the Sanskrit tongue and all the shastras and the sciences of the time, but she was brave, resolute, and generous; while in beauty she had no equal among the maids of India. Thus she fully deserved, in every sense, the name of Sunderbai or the beautiful maiden.

In spite of all her learning, Sunderbai was as light-hearted as any of her companions. One day she was playing with her girl friends in one of her father's gardens. The garden was filled with great shady trees and with rare sweet-scented flowers: in the middle was a palace, provided with all the comfort and luxury of which the times knew. Sunderbai

and the maidens with her had passed the heat of the day in the shelter of the palace, and had just left it to play in the garden.

Now it so happened that at this time the Crown Prince of Valabhipura, Birsing, reached this spot. He had been hunting and had lost his companions. Weary with the heat, he had come to rest beneath the trees in King Kesarising's garden. Choosing the shadiest spot, he spread his saddle-cloth on the ground, and lay down upon it. Suddenly he heard voices singing close by. Forgetting his fatigue, he rose to his feet, and began to walk towards the sound, thinking to join the singers, whoever they might be. As he walked, he peered through the bushes, and suddenly he saw that the singers were a party of girls. He stopped; and thinking it unbecoming to go further, he sat down behind a tree and listened to the song.

When it was over, the girls began to talk together. Suddenly one said, "When I marry, I shall lead my husband a life of it! Men trample on their wives, just as if they were their boots; and yet, if a man has no wife, he is perfectly useless." The princess answered, "Yes, indeed! But I am going to marry Prince Birsing, the son of the King of Valabhipura; and I mean so to win his love that he will have no eyes for any other. If he does not treat me as I mean him to, I shall show him by my strength and courage that women are every bit as brave as men. He will then be so ashamed of himself, that he will love and honour me, and will do whatever I want him to."



A third girl said, "But, princess, you surely do not mean that your husband will never take a second wife?"

Birsing was all attention on hearing his name. He realised that the second speaker must be Kesarising's daughter, and that it was impossible for him to stay where he was any longer. He turned to leave the garden, but, before he went, he looked through the trees at Sunderbai. Her face was bright as a summer moon, and her form was fashioned in the most perfect mould.

Thoughtfully the prince replaced his saddle and left the garden, leading his horse. Meeting some men outside, he asked whether the princess lived there. They told him the garden belonged to Sunderbai. Thereupon Birsing vowed that he would make Sunderbai his bride.

When the prince had ridden home, he told the king, his father, that he wanted to marry Kesarising's daughter. As the two families of Valabhipura and Sayla were equal in rank, Birsing's father sent a priest to Kesarising, to call for Sunderbai's hand for his son. Kesarising readily agreed to the betrothal; the wedding was celebrated with great splendour, and Sunderbai was borne in state to Birsing's palace.

The young prince wished to see whether Sunderbai would make good her boast; so, after their marriage, he would not go near her. The princess wondered at his conduct, and her slave-girls and companions wondered still more; but Sunderbai

bravely hid her feelings, and on her lovely face could be seen no sign of grief or anger.

After some months had passed, one of the princess's maids came and said to her, "Princess! to-day is New Year's day, and there is a great festival at the temple. Would you not like to go and see it? It will cheer you." Sunderbai agreed, and at once made ready to go.

Early in the morning the princess left her palace in great state, and went with her maids and ladies to the temple. There every precaution had been taken that, while the princess was inside, no male should enter. But when Birsing heard that Sunderbai had gone to the temple, he also went there with some of his courtiers, unseen by her, so that he might discover what she would do. None could refuse Birsing admittance; so he followed Sunderbai to where she was worshipping Parvati. As she worshipped, she prayed aloud, "Queen of the world, bless in all ways my husband!" Then she raised her head, and, as she did so, her eyes met those of Birsing, who at this moment came out of his hiding-place, and said with a mocking smile, "Is this the way you mean to conquer your husband by your strength and valour, as you boasted in your garden?"

Sunderbai then knew that Birsing had overheard her. Claspings her hands, she answered, "Lord of my life, women are but foolish creatures. A girl's chatter is of no account. Pay no heed to mine and in your wisdom forgive me!" But Birsing shook his head, and answered sternly, "Until you make good.

your words, princess, I will not enter the door of your palace." So saying, he turned on his heel and left the temple.

For some moments Sunderbai stood looking after him, the picture of distress, then, thinking that if she wanted to win him, she would have to give him proofs of her courage and strength, she finished her worship and left the temple.

For many days and nights Sunderbai pondered what she should do, but she could think of nothing. At last, she resolved to flee from the palace. Outside, Parvati might send her the chance which she sought. But to quit the palace and slip through the guards, was no light thing. At length she took from her finger a ring, given her by her father, Kesarising; handing it to a slave-girl, she said, "Take this to the king, my father, and say, 'The jewel in the ring is loose. Please get it put right'." The slave-girl reached Sayla safely and gave the King Sunderbai's ring and message.

When Kesarising saw the ring, he guessed that some calamity had overtaken his daughter. He dismissed the slave-girl with a present; and, when alone, he took out the stone. Underneath was a note, on which was written, "My father, when two parrots quarrel, it is useless to keep them in the same cage. One day in the garden I said to one of my companions that if I married Birsing, I would, by my strength and valour, make him madly in love with me. The prince overheard what I said, and is putting me to the proof. I am in great trouble.

Send me, I pray you, a man's dress, a coat of mail, and a swift horse; but let no one know."

King Kesarising was greatly troubled by the letter. "A man's dress, a coat of mail, and a swift horse," he said to himself, "are easily sent; but how can I send them without letting others know?" After much thought he resolved secretly to dig a tunnel from a mountain near Valabhipura into his daughter's palace. At great cost and immense labour he made the tunnel, and conveyed the horse, the armour, and the dress to his daughter. Sunderbai was delighted, and, donning the dress and the coat of mail, warned her maids and ladies to tell no one of her flight. Then, mounting on her horse, she rode out through the tunnel.

Two days later a bold and handsome youth came to Valabhipura, and asked for an audience with the king. It was granted; and all the court marvelled at the stature and beauty of the stranger. The king, wondering, asked him, "What is your name and who is your father?" "My name is Ratansing," was the reply. "My father is a Rajput, but I have quarrelled with him, and I have come here in search of service. I have sworn an oath not to reveal my father's name or country. Any work you give me, I will do. Give me but a chance of proving my skill and courage, and you will never regret it."

The king liked the bold words and fearless bearing of the young Rajput, and made him at once take his place among his nobles. Ratansing salaamed, as if deeply grateful. Although he had no chance of

showing his mettle in the battlefield, he soon proved it in the chase, where by his skill in horsemanship and bold riding he always out-distanced the other nobles. On this account Birsing conceived the greatest affection for Ratansing; and, never suspecting who the newcomer was, he told him in the strictest confidence all about Sunderbai's pride and arrogance, and how he had treated her as she deserved. Ratansing laughed and said, "You are not treating her over-well, are you, prince?" Birsing replied, "I really love her better than any one else in the world; nor do I wish ever to marry any one else. But I want to test her and see if she will make good her boast. If she is a true Rajputni, she will do so." Ratansing smiled but said nothing.

Some days afterwards it so happened that a fierce lion began to haunt the outskirts of Valabhipura. Every day it killed and ate one, if not two, of the inhabitants. The young nobles tried every means to destroy it, but none succeeded.

At last the outcry was so great that the Rana ordered Ratansing to hunt it. Ratansing joyfully accepted the task, and asked that the king's artificers should make him a hollow iron image of a man. He had the image put in a spot where the lion had killed several men, got inside it, and sent away the man who had brought it. At midnight the lion came, and, thinking the image to be a man, rushed at it. As it tried in vain to knock the image over, Ratansing slipped out, and with a single blow of his sword cut the lion's head off. Then he dragged the carcass

home, and, thrusting it beneath his cot, went to sleep.

Birsing, who had all that night been consumed with fears for his friend, went early next morning to Ratansing's home, to learn the news. The latter would not receive Birsing in his room, lest he should pierce his disguise. He went to the door to greet Birsing, dragging the lion's carcase after him. Birsing was delighted to see it, and, taking Ratansing with him, went off at once to tell the news to the king, who bestowed on Ratansing a robe of honour and a grant of land.

A year or so later the king went a-hunting in a distant forest, taking with him Ratansing. A neighbouring king heard through his spies of the king's absence, and, making a sudden onslaught, took Valabhipura. Now, through illness, Birsing had not gone with his father to the hunt; so he too fell into the enemy's hands. Having taken the capital and the heir apparent, the neighbouring king set up defences round Valabhipura, so as to make it impregnable.

When the news reached the king he was broken-hearted. "My son! O my son Birsing!" he cried in Ratansing's hearing. "If they kill you, how can I live without you? Had I but you with me, I should soon recover my city."

Ratansing comforted the old king as best he could, and then he obtained leave to go to Saylá and bring what troops he could from Kesarising, the king of that place, who Ratansing said was his kinsman.

Ratansing rode swiftly to Sayla, told Kesarising all that had happened, and, begging from him a picked body of lancers, returned to the old king's camp. He led his force to the place where Kesarising had, at Sunderbai's instance, dug a tunnel into Valabhipura. There he divided his men into four squadrons of fifty each. He bade three of them make feigned attacks on different parts of the city, while he himself with the fourth squadron entered the city through the tunnel. The foemen inside easily repulsed the attacks, but while they were rejoicing at their easy victory, Ratansing entered the city through the tunnel, took the garrison by surprise, and, after killing many of them, opened the gates for the three squadrons outside, and with them completed the capture of the city. Ratansing then freed Birsing from the loathsome dungeon in which he had been confined, and, after embracing his friend, took him to his father. Both Birsing and his father poured out their thanks, but Ratansing answered modestly that he was but a soldier in the service of Valabhipura, and that he had only done his duty.

Shortly afterwards Ratansing excused himself, pleading that he had to entertain some friends who had just come from his old home to see him. Taking leave of the king, he went into the fort. As he did not return, Birsing began to look for him; but he could find him nowhere. At last some men told him that they had seen him going to Sunderbai's palace. Instantly a dark suspicion entered Birsing's mind.

"Ratansing," he said to himself, must be my wife's

lover. That is how he learnt about the secret entrance to the city. Through it he must have gone in old days, to have stolen meetings with her." Drawing his sword, he rushed up the steps that led to Sunderbai's chamber. She was alone, and rose to greet him; but her humility only added fuel to his anger. "Where is your Ratan, you faithless woman?" he cried. Sunderbai, amazed at the question, answered, "Lord of my soul, of whom do you speak?" Birsing's fury grew fiercer still. "Vile wretch!" he roared. "You know well of whom I speak. Where is Ratan, your lover, he who used to visit you by the secret passage into the city? Show him to me at once, sorceress, that I may cut off his head, and then stab you to the heart." Sunderbai drew herself to her full height, and said, "What better death could I wish, sweet lord, than death at your hands? But before you stab me, look well into my face: perchance you may find there your friend Ratan, with whom you are now so angry."

Birsing looked into Sunderbai's face, which now smilingly mocked him. At once he recognized her as the Ratansing whom he sought, the Ratansing who had saved his father's throne and his own life. Falling at her feet, he implored her pardon. But Sunderbai continued to tease him. "Confess, dear lord," she said, "that I have redeemed the pledge I made in my father's garden, and that women can be every bit as brave as men."

Birsing embraced her tenderly, and, knowing that she was right, begged again—and this time obtained



—her forgiveness. Taking her by the hand he led her back to his father's presence, and there made her tell the whole story of her adventures from beginning to end.

From that day on, Birsing no longer neglected Sunderbai, but was her devoted lover and until the hour of her death he never thought of wedding any wife but her.

### NOTES

**mould :** pattern. Taken from the plaster mould in which copies of statues are made.

**in great state :** with all the pomp and ceremony due to her rank.

**Parvati :** wife of Lord Shiva.

**chase :** hunting.

**artificers :** workmen.

**impregnable :** so strong that no enemy could take it.

### EXERCISES

1. What was the rash promise made by Sunderbai? How did she redeem it?

2. Give in your own words an account of the events which led up to the capture of Valabhipura and describe how Sunderbai regained the city.

3. Write a dialogue between Sunderbai and Birsing in *their old age*, discussing the events as told in the story.

4. "Women are every bit as brave as men". Discuss this in an essay, quoting any examples either from history or your own experience which bear upon the subject.

5. Punctuate the following:

this is the story of a noble princess who won the love of her husband by proving to him that a woman could be just as brave and fearless as a man she disguised herself as a Rajput prince and performed many deeds of valour by her bravery she was at last able to save not only the life of her husband but also the kingdom which he was to inherit.

6. Give synonyms for the following words:

fatigue, courage, conduct, precaution, immense, don, fearless, kinsman, implore, forgiveness.

## VII

### WILLIAM PITT

WILLIAM PITT (1759-1806) was one of the greatest Prime Ministers England has ever had. His period in office extends over twenty-three years, from 1783 to 1806, the year of his death. He is generally considered to be one of the greatest peace ministers that England has ever produced, and, although he was not as well fitted for the conduct of war as his great father, the Earl of Chatham, he kept the confidence of the nation through the first thirteen years of the struggle against Revolutionary and Napoleonic France.

This speech on slavery is one of Pitt's many fine efforts, for he was a distinguished orator and lived in a period when oratory flourished in England. His contemporaries were Edmund Burke and Charles James Fox, who were considered to be the most eloquent men of their times and fit to be compared with the orators of ancient Greece and Rome.

The slave trade was finally abolished in 1807 owing to the efforts of William Wilberforce, one of the noblest of social reformers. It was not until 1833, however, that those people already in slavery in the British Empire were freed.

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### SPEECH AGAINST SLAVERY

I BELIEVE, Sir, that if we will reflect an instant, we shall find that on the same ground on which we are now disposed to proscribe Africa for ever from all possibility of improvement, we ourselves might, in like manner, have been proscribed and for ever shut out from all the blessings which we now enjoy.

There was a time, Sir, which it may be fit sometimes to revive in the remembrance of our countrymen, when even human sacrifices are said to have been offered in this island. But I would peculiarly observe on this day, for it is a case precisely in point, that the very practice of the slave trade once prevailed among us. Slaves, as we may read in

Henry's *History of Great Britain*, were formerly an established article of our exports. "Great numbers," he says, "were exported like cattle from the British coast, and were to be seen exposed for sale in the Roman market." It does not distinctly appear by what means they were procured; but there was unquestionably no small resemblance, in this particular point, between the case of our ancestors and that of the present wretched natives of Africa; for the historian tells you that "adultery, witchcraft, and debt, were probably some of the chief sources of supplying the Roman market with British slaves; that prisoners taken in war were added to the number; and that there might be among them some unfortunate gamblers who, after having lost all their goods, at length staked themselves, their wives, and their children." Every one of these sources of slavery has been stated, and almost precisely in the same terms, to be at this hour a source of slavery in Africa. And these circumstances, Sir, with a solitary instance or two of human sacrifices, furnish the alleged proofs that Africa labours under a natural incapacity for civilization; that it is enthusiasm and fanaticism to think that she can ever enjoy the knowledge and the morals of Europe; that Providence never intended her to rise above a state of barbarism; that Providence has irrevocably doomed her to be only a nursery for slaves for us free and civilized Europeans. Allow of this principle, as applied to Africa, and I should be glad to know why it might not also have been applied to

ancient and uncivilized Britain. Why might not some Roman senator, reasoning on the principles of some honourable gentlemen, and pointing to British barbarians, have predicted with equal boldness, "There is a people that will never rise to civilization; there is a people destined never to be free, a people without the understanding necessary for the attainment of useful arts; depressed by the hand of Nature below the level of the human species; and created to form a supply of slaves for the rest of the world"? Might not this have been said, according to the principles which we now hear stated, in all respects as fairly and as truly of Britain herself, at that period of her history, as it can now be said by us of the inhabitants of Africa?

We, Sir, have long since emerged from barbarism. We have almost forgotten that we were once barbarians. We are now raised to a situation which exhibits a striking contrast to every circumstance by which a Roman might have characterized us, and by which we now characterize Africa. There is, indeed, one thing wanting to complete the contrast, and to clear us altogether from the imputation of acting, even to this hour, as barbarians; for we continue to this hour a barbarous traffic in slaves; we continue it even yet, in spite of all our great and undeniable pretensions to civilization. We were once as obscure among the nations of the earth, as savage in our manners, as debased in our morals, as degraded in our understandings, as these unhappy Africans are at present. But in the lapse of a long

series of years, by a progression slow, and for a time almost imperceptible, we have become rich in a variety of acquirements, favoured above measure in the gifts of Providence, unrivalled in commerce, pre-eminent in arts, foremost in the pursuits of philosophy and science, and established in all the blessings of civil society. We are in the possession of peace, of happiness, and of liberty. We are under the guidance of a mild and beneficent religion; and we are protected by impartial laws, and the purest administration of justice. We are living under a system of government which our own happy experience leads us to pronounce the best and wisest which has ever been framed, a system which has become the admiration of the world. From all these blessings we must for ever have been shut out, had there been any truth in those principles which some gentlemen have not hesitated to lay down as applicable to the case of Africa. Had those principles been true, we ourselves had languished to this hour in that miserable state of ignorance, brutality, and degradation, in which history proves our ancestors to have been immersed. Had other nations adopted these principles in their conduct toward us, had other nations applied to Great Britain the reasoning which some of the senators of this very island now apply to Africa, ages might have passed without our emerging from barbarism; and we, who are enjoying the blessings of British civilization, of British laws, and British liberty, might, at this hour, have been little superior, either in morals, in knowledge, or

refinement, to the rude inhabitants of the coast of Guinea.

If, then, we feel that this perpetual confinement in the fetters of brutal ignorance would have been the greatest calamity which could have befallen us; if we view with gratitude and exultation the contrast between the peculiar blessings we enjoy, and the wretchedness of the ancient inhabitants of Britain; if we shudder to think of the misery which would still have overwhelmed us had Great Britain continued to the present times to be a mart for slaves to the more civilized nations of the world, through some cruel policy of theirs, God forbid that we should any longer subject Africa to the same dreadful scourge, and preclude the light of knowledge, which has reached every other quarter of the globe, from having access to her coasts.

### NOTES

**proscribe**: literally, to place outside the law; hence, to cut off from any benefit.

**the Roman Market**: during the Roman occupation of Britain, slaves were exported in large quantities to Rome for sale.

**gamesters**: gamblers.

**enthusiasm**: the meaning of this word has changed since Pitt's time. To him it meant a kind of wild fanaticism such as is found among religious maniacs.

**senator**: the Senate was the Roman equivalent of the British House of Lords.

**honourable gentlemen**: members of the House of Commons. It is customary in the House never to refer to a member by name but as "the honourable member for.....".

**pretensions**: claims.

**senators of this very island**: members of both houses of Parliament.

**rude**: rough, uncivilized.

**mart**: market (old-fashioned).

## EXERCISES

1. Give a brief summary of Pitt's arguments against the practice of slavery.
2. Write an original speech of not more than 150 words on "The Evil of Intemperance".
3. Use the following phrases in sentences of your own, showing that you understand their meaning:  
a striking contrast; reflect an instant; expose for sale; to form a supply; pronounce the best; view with gratitude.
4. Convert the following into indirect speech beginning, "Pitt said that....."  
"If then, we feel that this perpetual confinement in the fetters of brutal ignorance would have been the greatest calamity which could have befallen us; if we view with gratitude and exultation the contrast between the peculiar blessings we enjoy, and the wretchedness of the ancient inhabitants of Britain, God forbid that we should any longer subject Africa to the same dreadful scourge."
5. Point out and make a list of the metaphors used in this speech.
6. Imagine that you were a reporter in the House of Commons when this speech was made. Make a short report, suitable for a newspaper.

## VIII

### I. A. WILLIAMS

MR. I. A. WILLIAMS is a well-known writer of stories and has contributed a good deal to the more important London magazines. This story first appeared in the *London Mercury* and was subsequently reprinted in *The Mercury Story Book*, a collection of stories from that magazine.

It is worth noticing that all the incidents in this story take place in one day and that the time taken between Sir Charles Trumpington's handing over of the letter to Mr. Tape and its ultimate return is not more than ten hours.

The situation affords the author great scope for bringing into play his gifts of humour and satire. It is undoubtedly ridiculous that a pelican should be allowed to eat an important diplomatic despatch, but the humour of the situation is greatly increased at the end when it is discovered that the envelope over which Tape has gone to so much trouble contains nothing more valuable than a few postage stamps. This device which is used often in satire (both verse and prose) is called *anti-climax* or *bathos*.

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### THE MAN WHO STOLE THE PELICAN

SIR CHARLES TRUMPINGTON, permanent Chief of His Majesty's Diplomatic Office, was in a quandary. He knew very well that the foolscap envelope, which lay unopened on his desk, contained his emissary's secret report on the recent murders at Tresbón, the capital of Zenobia. He recognized the writing of the address, and, moreover, the report was expected. But, on the other hand, he had not expected this report—a document the secrecy of which was of international importance—to reach him for at least another two days. On Wednesday, at the earliest, he had thought that it might arrive; and now there it was staring him in the face, at ten o'clock on



Monday morning. It was most annoying.

"Confound Travers!" thought Sir Charles, "I wish he were sometimes not quite so speedy in carrying out his instructions!"

For the fact was, much as Trumpington wished for this report, he was expecting a visit, in half an hour's time, from the Zenobian Ambassador: and he particularly wished to be able to assure His Excellency that no reliable account of the Tresbon murders had yet reached London. That would enable him to give the Ambassador a chance of explaining the affair, and would also allow Trumpington to estimate how honestly Zenobia intended to act by Great Britain in this troublesome affair. It would, of course, be quite possible to read the report, and still assert to his visitor that he had not done so. But Trumpington had the peculiar cast of mind that dislikes the lie direct—even in a good cause—and he therefore sought for some less blatantly untruthful way out of his difficulty. He would put the document, still unopened and unread, in his safe. That would do, at a pinch, though he would not feel particularly comfortable about it. Supposing the Ambassador were to word his questions awkwardly, and ask, for instance: "Do you mean to assure me, Sir Charles, that you have no report on these regrettable incidents"—he would hardly use the word *murders*—"in your files?" To answer such a question would certainly entail some violence to Sir Charles Trumpington's conscience.

No, he reflected, that would hardly do. The lie

direct he would avoid, if he possibly could. It would be better to get the wretched report clear out of the building; and then, unless the Ambassador were so unfortunate in his choice of phrases as to use the verb *receive*—"Have you not *received* an account?"—he might get out of the affair without a stain upon his character. He finally decided to have the inopportune document removed, temporarily, from the Diplomatic Office, and he therefore rang the bell.

"Ask Mr. Tape to step this way," he said to the commissionaire who answered his ring.

Two minutes later Mr. Michael Tape made his appearance. "Ah, Tape," said the chief, affably, but yet with a touch of nervousness in his manner, "nothing of any special importance in this morning, I suppose?"

"Nothing particular, sir."

"Well—er—well—the fact is, Tape, it would be a considerable convenience to me if you would condescend to take the morning off to-day."

Tape looked surprised. "Take the morning off, sir," he repeated incredulously.

"Yes, quite so," replied Sir Charles. "Go out for a walk. It's a nice sunny morning. Go anywhere you like. And, by the way, you might slip this letter in your pocket before you go—but mind you take the greatest possible care of it—the very greatest care. Guard it as you would your honour. Your life, I mean," he corrected, thinking, no doubt, that the latter was a more intrinsically valuable commodity.

Tape took the envelope. Travers's writing, he knew; and he also knew of the Tresbon murders, the Zenobian Ambassador's impending call, and the line his chief intended to take at the interview. He had, in addition, a fairly accurate appreciation of Sir Charles Trumpington's mental habits. So he was able to grasp the situation.

"I understand, sir," he said, slipping the precious envelope into the inside breast pocket of his jacket.

Sir Charles looked somewhat pained at his subordinate's remark.

"I don't know, Mr. Tape," he said stiffly, "that there is any need for you to understand. That will do for the present. Go out immediately, and be back with Travers's rep—er, I mean, with the envelope, at two o'clock."

Michael Tape retired, fetched his hat and stick from his own room, and left the building. He strolled along Whitehall a short way, then turned through the Horse Guards Arch and sauntered idly into St. James's Park. He was a man of about forty years of age, inclining to stoutness, and of somewhat fastidious tastes. His hair was well-brushed and black in colour—though the latter fact did not prevent certain of his more jocose friends from seizing the obvious opportunity afforded by his surname, and by his employment in the Civil Service, to the extent of calling him "Red Tape" in playful moments. This annoyed Michael, though he tried not to show it.

Michael Tape's passion in life was the study of

birds and beasts of all sorts. Every Sunday afternoon, for example, he would wander round the Zoo, and he was known to all the keepers there as one of the more instructed of the regular visitors of the gardens. Most of his meditations centred round animals of various sorts, and sometimes he would imagine himself going on romantic expeditions to distant parts of the world and returning with strange and rare beasts and birds for collection in Regent's Park. It was one of his day-dreams to see the magic phrase "Presented by Michaël Tape, Esq., F.Z.S.," painted upon innumerable little tin labels. This morning, however, he did not go to the Zoo, but into St. James's Park, to visit his old friends the pelicans.

He was, apparently, in luck, for half a dozen of those admirably grotesque birds had left the water of the lake and were sunning themselves on the grass close to the railings, against which Tape leaned idly, watching the pompous movements of the pelicans. One of them had carried a small fish along from the water, but had dropped it on the turf without swallowing it, for pelicans, as anyone who has watched them knows, are fond of toying with their food—tossing it up in the air and catching it, then dropping it again—before finally making a meal of it. Tape thought it would be amusing to get hold of the fish and to hold it up by the tail for one of the birds to catch. He therefore bent over the rails and tried to draw the fish near to him with his stick. This manœuvre attracted the attention of the pelicans, who came poking round his stick, making clacking noises

with their long bills.

Then, while this entertaining sport was at its height, a horrible thing happened. The precious envelope, with Travers's secret report inside it, slipped out of Tape's pocket and fell right in front of the assembled pelicans.

This, in itself, would not have been a terribly serious matter, had not one of the birds taken into its head the perverse idea that the wretched envelope might make a pleasant change from a diet of fish. With this in mind, and before Tape could rescue his precious charge, the pelican in question had seized the envelope, had tossed it up in the air, had caught it adroitly, and was holding it in his bill. Tape was horrified.

"Give it here," he shouted to the bird. But shouting did no good, the bird merely once more threw the thing up and caught it.

Tape tried persuasion. "Pretty Pelly," he coaxed, working upon an obvious analogy, "there's a good Pelly. There's a nice bird." And he held out his hand, hoping, supposedly, that the pelican would hand the document back to him.

But no miracle of the kind happened; persuasion was as useless as shouting; and the pelican, deciding to taste this strange titbit, incontinently bolted the envelope. Into the pouch it went, then it could be seen travelling down the throat, and finally it disappeared into the innermost portions of the bird's anatomy.

This was a disaster indeed. Tape could see his

whole career disappearing in the crop of the pelican, which, together with its companions, was now waddling towards the lake. What was to be done? No park-keeper was in sight to whom Tape could appeal for aid; and he knew that if he once took his eye off the identical bird that contained Travers's report (he had heard of documents being digested, but never before in quite this way) he would not recognize it from its fellows, and the whole flock might have to be slaughtered in order to recover the lost document. At this thought he quailed; to have his six beloved pelicans butchered was more than he could have stood, even had he thought that he could have persuaded the park authorities to do it. He must come to a decision, at once; and this necessity being forced upon him, he did so. He vaulted, with surprising agility, over the railings, rushed towards the pelican and, remembering his early achievements as a Rugby football player, threw himself full length after it, clasping it round the neck and shoulders.

But the pelican was not for surrendering without a struggle, and for a minute or so bird and civil servant rolled about this way and that on the grass, the former emitting loud squawks and the latter puffing and snorting like a thousand grampuses. But eventually Tape had the better of it, and managed to get on his feet, still clasping the struggling bird to his breast.

A pelican, it will readily be understood, is no mean weight, but Tape succeeded in clambering back across the railings without losing his prisoner.

Luckily the park was almost deserted, but one male loafer and a couple of nursemaids had now appeared on the scene, and in the far, far distance our hero could see a policeman making as hurried an approach as dignity would permit. Tape realised, therefore, that in a few moments authority would arrive, and would certainly prevent his kidnapping project. But it was only a few yards to the road, along which he could see a disengaged taxi driving slowly in his direction. To the taxi, then, he bolted, the terrified bird fighting all the while to get free of his clutches, and making all the noises its capacious throat could command.

Michael Tape, however, was made of stern stuff, and kept a firm grasp of his lively burden. Gasping for breath he tottered to the taxi (which the driver had pulled up in astonishment) and pushed the bird, beak foremost, in through the fortunately open window.

The driver began to protest, but Tape cut him short with the magic phrase "Three times your fare!" and then tried to get into the car himself. But the pelican, apparently, was of another opinion, and every time the luckless Michael put his foot inside the door he found his leg painfully assaulted with all the violence of which that very powerful beak was capable. Yet the policeman (who had accelerated his pace) was now within thirty yards, things were almost desperate, and into the cab Michael plunged, to the further severe detriment of his calves.

"Where to, sir?" cried the driver.

"Anywhere you like!" yelled Tape, and off the taxi started, beating the policeman by a bare five yards.

The drive was such as neither Michael nor the driver (nor even possibly the bird) was ever afterwards likely to forget. First of all the gallant diplomat had his feathered companion to reckon with, and the latter was in an excessively obstreperous mood. It flapped at Tape's face with its wings; it prodded him violently in the stomach; and all the time it gave vent to blood-curdling noises which made the taxi-driver shudder, attracted the attention of all passers-by, and caused every policeman on the route to draw out his pocket-book and make a note of the number of the car. At last, however, the confounded bird appeared to tire, and had a quiet spell which gave its captor a chance to collect his thoughts.

This, of course, brought him face to face with his second problem—where was he to take the pelican, and how was he to extract from it the precious report? Michael Tape thought and thought, and at last he came to the conclusion that the unfortunate bird would have to be killed and cut open. But who should do it? He firmly refused to face the possibility that he himself should kill the bird. It seemed rather a poulterer's job. Then he reflected again that perhaps pelicans were not poultry and that he ought to apply to a veterinary surgeon for assistance. But he knew no vet., he considered, and then the solution struck him. The greater must



comprise the less! What a veterinary could do a doctor must certainly also be able to perform—and he had, among his personal friends, a distinguished surgeon who would surely come to his rescue.

“Drive to 65 Harley Street,” he shouted through the speaking-tube, and the driver, relieved at being given so respectable an address, nodded assent.

Five minutes more brought him to 65 Harley Street, the house of George Redman, one of the most eminent of the younger surgeons and an old friend of Tape’s. Getting out of the taxi, and slamming the door quickly before the pelican could follow him, he was about to ring the bell when the front door of the house opened and out walked a pompous gentleman whom he recognized as his Grace the Duke of Dumpshire, with whom he occasionally played bridge at his club. The Duke stared hard at Tape’s muddled and dishevelled appearance, but he nodded affably enough, and was about to speak to him when he suddenly noticed the pelican looking out of the taxi window.

“Heavens!” exclaimed the Duke, and he stumped off down the street, obviously under the impression that the young diplomatist (diplomatists are still young at forty) had taken leave of his senses.

Fortunately Redman was disengaged, and Tape was soon in his consulting-room, pouring out his woes to him.

“But,” said the surgeon, “where do I come in?”

“Well, you see,” replied Tape, “I thought you might cut the bird open for me, and recover Travers’s

report."

"The devil you did!" exclaimed Redman. "My dear chap, I can't operate on a pelican."

"Why not? You're a surgeon, aren't you?"

"Of course, I am."

"Well, then," said Tape, "there you are! If you can cut open human beings, surely you can manage a mere bird."

"Anyhow," answered Redman decisively, "I'm not going to."

Tape, however, was not to be put off even with so definite a refusal. "My dear Redman," he continued, "think of the service you will be rendering to the country! Travers's report is of immense value. It may make the difference between peace and war. And then think of the good turn you will be doing to me, one of your oldest pals! For if I lose that report, it means the sack for me from the Diplomatic Office."

"And you jolly well deserve it!" was Redman's reply. Then he went on, more favourably: "But I suppose that I shall have to try to get you out of your scrape. Yet I don't fancy that it will be necessary to cut open the wretched pelican—for whom, honestly, I feel more sorry than I do for you, old chap!"

"But what else will recover the report?"

"Why, you juggins," said Redman, "have you never heard of an emetic?"

"Lord! What an idea!" shouted Tape, and before Redman could say another word he had dashed

out, paid off the taxi (at the promised treble rate), and was staggering back into the house grasping once more in his arms the fluttering, squawking pelican.

"Hi! Stop! Not in here, you fool!" yelled the surgeon—but too late. The pelican was already in the consulting-room, where it proceeded to flutter madly round, upsetting the telephone, the inkpot, a couple of vases of flowers and other trifles.

On the scene that followed a veil must be drawn. The reader, if he has any imagination, can reconstruct it for himself, if he chooses (which he may not). It is sufficient to say that in three-quarters of an hour that priceless envelope was recovered, but looking much the worse for its experience, and smelling amazingly of partly-digested fish. The pelican, also, was hardly looking in its best form, and the state of the consulting-room was not a credit to Harley Street.

"My dear Redman," cried Tape exultingly, when it was all over, "you can't imagine how grateful I am to you. You have saved my reputation and my position. You have quite possibly also saved England from a war. Thank you a million times, my dear fellow. Now I must get back to the Diplomatic Office. Trumpington will be expecting me."

He made for the door, but Redman grabbed him by the arm.

"Stop a minute," said the surgeon, "what about your feathered friend here?"

Tape looked puzzled.

"Perhaps," he hesitated, "you wouldn't mind my leaving him here for a bit? I would...."

"No you don't, my boy," Redman assured him. "When you leave here that bird does too."

"But I can't take a pelican to the Diplomatic Office!"

"That's your trouble, not mine. After all, you stole the pelican!"

Then it was that Michael Tape's dream came to him again. He saw his chance of rounding off the adventure in a manner at once dashing and whimsical. At last there would be one of those little labels, with "Presented by Michael Tape, Esq., F.Z.S." upon it, in Regent's Park. He would present the pelican to the Zoo!

This was, of course, sheer madness—a direct result, he afterwards believed, of satanic temptation, and it led him into still more trouble. But for the moment his soul was serene and joyful. His eyes glistened.

"All right," he said, with assumed carelessness. "I'll take the beastly bird and get rid of it somehow."

Once more the poor pelican, now scarcely resisting at all, for it felt uncommonly limp after the doctoring its insides had been given, was hustled into a taxi along with Michael Tape. Soon they reached the Zoological Society's offices, and Michael alighted and entered the building.

"I was wondering," he said to the clerk, "whether the Society would like to accept a pelican—a fine specimen—as a gift from me!"

"I should imagine, sir," replied the clerk, "that the

Society would be most grateful. Perhaps you would care to write to the Secretary about it?"

"I should rather see him now," answered Tape, "for, as a matter of fact, I've got it outside in a taxi."

The clerk looked at him queerly, for he had just seen an evening paper which gave a highly coloured account of the theft that morning of one of the pelicans in St. James's Park. He noticed also that Tape's clothes were muddy and that he looked as if he had been struggling with something.

"Very good, sir," said the clerk, "I will see if I can find the Secretary. Perhaps you wouldn't mind stepping into the waiting-room for a few minutes, sir?"

The unsuspecting Tape—who had forgotten all about evening papers—did as he was bid, and no sooner was he safely in, than the astute clerk telephoned to the police.

Unfortunate Michael Tape! In but a few minutes there arrived two stalwart constables who, when he tried to explain who he was, merely warned him that anything he said might be used in evidence against him, and, when he protested the excellence of his motives, answered: "All right, Mr. Pelican-Pincher, you can tell them that at the station!" So to the police station he was forced to go, and only with the greatest difficulty was he able to persuade the inspector to allow him to telephone to Sir Charles Trumpington. Having done that he felt a trifle easier in mind, for his chief had promised to come round at once to see what could be done. But

Tape had to wait Sir Charles's arrival in the cells, which he felt was no highly dignified position for a rising light of the Diplomatic Office. He consoled himself, however, with the thought that he had at least got rid of the pelican, and that he had Travers's report safe in his pocket.

Sir Charles Trumpington was as good as his word, and before long had bailed out our hero and heard his story.

"I must say, Tape," he said, as they drove towards Whitehall together, "that after your first inexcusable carelessness in allowing that ridiculous bird to get hold of Travers's letter you showed commendable perseverance in retrieving your blunder."

Tape murmured some acknowledgment of the compliment.

"You may be amused to learn," continued Sir Charles, "that this somewhat soiled and fishy envelope which I hold in my hand—really I hope you will not lose any more documents inside pelicans—does not contain Travers's report."

"Doesn't contain Travers's report!" cried Tape. "What do you mean, sir?"

"That my original calculation was correct. The report will only arrive on Wednesday, for I have just had a cable from Travers that he has posted it from Brindisi to-day. This," he continued opening the famous envelope, "contains, let me see—only a few Zenobian postage stamps for my granddaughter, Margaret. Travers is always so thoughtful. He loves to do little kindnesses of this sort

when his duties take him abroad."

Then it was that Michael Tape broke into a commentary upon recent events couched in language that was not only undiplomatic, but positively unparliamentary. Sir Charles, however, took no notice, for he was, after all, not totally devoid of human sympathy.

### NOTES

**quandary** (pronounce, qwon-dairy): a state of perplexity; a difficult situation.

**Tresbon, the capital of Zenobia**: these names are those of imaginary places.

**His Excellency**: the correct designation in the case of an ambassador, governor or viceroy.

**condescend to take the morning off**: an over-formal expression such as might be expected of a rather pompous, serious person like Sir Charles.

**jocose**: playful.

**Red Tape**: official files are generally bound together with red tape which has thus become a term of contempt for bureaucratic methods and ideals.

**F. Z. S**: Fellow of the Zoological Society of London. This fellowship is conferred by the Zoological Society on people who have gained distinction in the study of animals or who have presented it with some valuable animal for its Zoological Gardens (colloquially, the Zoo).

**admirably grotesque**: the pelican's exaggeratedly ugly appearance seemed admirable to Mr. Tape who, like all zoologists, appreciated the unusual.

**adroitly**: skilfully.

**Pretty Pelly**: upon an obvious analogy "Pretty Polly", a term of endearment for a parrot.

**incontinently**: with unreasonable haste.

**bolted**: swallowed hastily.

**digested**: in addition to the ordinary use of the word to digest food, there is another meaning. To make a digest of a document (a common practice in Government departments) means to summarize or arrange its contents in categories.

**vaulted**: leapt over.

**squawks**: harsh cries of birds either from pain or fear.

**grampuses**: 'Grampus' is a kind of blowing, spouting, blunt-headed sea-creature of the whale family: the

name is also applied to a person who breathes loud.  
**obstreperous**: noisy, vociferous.

**poulterer**: a dealer in poultry, fowls, geese, turkeys.

**vet.**: colloquial and short form of 'veterinary surgeon,' a medical man qualified to treat the diseases and injuries of animals.

**Harley Street**: a street in London in which the leading physicians and surgeons have their consulting rooms.

**juggins**: a slang term, simpleton.

**emetic**: a medicine that causes vomiting.

**limp**: lacking in energy, languid, slack.

**Pelican-Pincher**: 'to pinch,' is a slang term for 'to steal' 'Pelican-Pincher,' is a slang way of saying 'the man who stole the pelican.'

**Brindisi**: a sea port in the south-east of Italy.

### EXERCISES

1. Suppose that Tape had not been able to recover the envelope. Write an account of what happened when he returned to Sir Charles with his explanation.

2. What happened to Tape when he attempted to present the pelican to the Zoo? How was he finally released from his difficult position?

3. This story is classed as a humorous one. Show how the author obtains his humorous effects.

4. Write a letter from Tape to his friend Dr. Redman thanking him for his help and recounting his later experiences with the bird.

5. Explain in your own words the meaning of the following expressions:

how honestly Zenobia intended to act by Great Britain;  
 the lie direct;

entail some violence to Sir Charles Trumpington's conscience;

without a stain upon his character;

toying with their food;

could see his whole career disappearing into the crop of the pelican;

no mean weight;

the greater must comprise the less;

a veil must be drawn.

6. Write sentences showing that the following words can be used as more than one part of speech. At the end of each sentence, state which part of speech is represented:

report, lie, sun, toy, envelope, hand, quail, bolt, beat, rescue.



## IX

### J. H. WALSH

THIS story is taken from a collection called *Young Adventurers* published by Messrs. Longmans, Green and Company. It tells the story of the earliest experiments in wireless telegraphy which were made by the great genius Marconi, and the later development of the science to its present-day importance and efficiency. You will see from the table of dates given below how recent this development is.

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#### THE STORY OF LISTENING-IN

- 1895 : Marconi's earliest wireless telegraph apparatus completed.
- 1896 : Marconi's first experiments in England.
- 1899 : Marconi sends a telegraphic message across the Channel.
- 1901 : The first rescue by the aid of wireless.
- 1901 : Marconi and Professor Fleming send a wireless telegraph message across the Atlantic. (Sept. 12th).
- 1906 : The first wireless telephone broadcast to ships at sea (Christmas Eve).
- 1920 : Wireless telephone messages across the Atlantic.
- 1920 : The first broadcast concert from Chelmsford, England.
- 1922 : The first wireless entertainment station opened in London.

#### 1901. CORNWALL CALLING!

IN a deserted military barracks on a lonely hill

in Newfoundland, a group of men sat round a warm stove. They had just come in after a strenuous morning's work, and they were soaked to the skin. Outside, the rain lashed against the walls of their hut, and the wind was so strong that a man could hardly keep his feet against it. Even with the protection of seamen's boots and fur coats most men would have thought twice before venturing out on such a day. But these men had been out for hours in the wind and rain—flying kites!

Cocoa and bread and cheese were being served by one of the party. Their leader appeared to have little interest in the food, and still less in the weather. From time to time he walked across to an electrical instrument in one corner of the room. It did not look a particularly exciting instrument. Apart from a number of wires, its chief visible features were a battery and a telephone receiver.

A few days before, Guglielmo Marconi had arrived in Newfoundland from England. He was already famous as the inventor of wireless telegraphy, for it was five years since he had startled the world by sending and receiving telegraphic dots and dashes "over the air." Using his apparatus, ships at sea were now able to call others to their assistance when in distress. Every month brought fresh news of Marconi's achievements. But to-day—12th September, 1901—he was attempting something which made most scientists shake doubtful heads. He was trying to receive a message sent from the other side of the Atlantic.

Up to this time, wireless messages had been sent only very short distances. Most scientists believed that wireless "waves" travelled in straight lines. As the earth's surface curves considerably between England and Newfoundland, people thought that messages sent out from England could not possibly be received on the earth so many thousands of miles away. Marconi and his followers had a different opinion.

The storm round those deserted barracks seemed to grow worse as time went on. The hands of the men were chilled to the bone. Outside the barracks a strange-looking kite now flew high, straining against the wind. Instead of the usual "string" it had a metal cable, attached by insulated wires to a telegraph pole. From this cable, which acted as an aerial, a thinner wire ran to the receiving apparatus in the house. It had taken the whole morning to erect the aerial, apart from several unsuccessful attempts on previous days. Now at last the work was completed, and all was ready for the message to come through. Would it come?

Marconi left the stove, and looked anxiously at the clock on the wall. The message was to be sent out by his friend, Professor Fleming, from the wireless transmitting station they had built at Poldhu in Cornwall. All plans had been made: Professor Fleming was to transmit from 12 noon to 3 p.m. every day until he received further instructions.

Noon came, and passed. Marconi sat silent at the receiver. He knew the signal that had been agreed

upon: the letter "S" of the Morse code, repeated continually. It was a simple signal—just three dots—and it has been chosen because it was feared that the apparatus might break down if called upon to send dashes as well!

At about 12-30 the young inventor suddenly stiffened. Those around him sat silent, watching and tense. They knew what was happening, and all eyes were turned to Marconi's face. The faint clicks came repeatedly, and Marconi listened to them for some moments in silence. Then he handed the receiver to a friend and said: "Can you hear anything?"

The assistant took the receiver. He listened for a moment, and then sprang to his feet. "I can! I can!" he shouted. "Three dots—there's no doubt about it!"

The feelings of this group of men, as one by one, they listened to the signal, can well be imagined. The Atlantic had been bridged. Wireless signals did *not* travel in straight lines, but followed the curve of the earth. If only the sending-apparatus could be made powerful enough, there need be no limit to the distance at which a wireless message could be received.

For a moment the men in that remote barrack room at Signal Hill, Newfoundland, sat perfectly still, each feeling in his own way the wonder of what had been accomplished. Outside the wind strained at their aerial, and the rain lashed down still.

## 1906. VOICES IN THE AIR

Wireless Operator John Fenton turned over in his bunk. The ship lay calm and still on a misty sea. From the deck above came the sounds of his ship-mates, singing in a discordant chorus. John sat up, and adjusted his earphones over his ears.

"Well, John, old fellow," he said to himself, "a Merry Christmas to you!" He thought a little while, and then added: "And a Happy New Year."

Fenton yawned. Three days before, he had fallen down a hatchway, and sprained his ankle. But that had not been allowed to interfere with his watch. There were only two Marconi operators on board the *Kittiwake*, and one of them had always to be listening-in. Wireless was proving a great boon to ships at sea. Already, in 1906, hundreds of lives had been saved by its means. Many a time had the trembling fingers of an operator sent out an emergency message calling other ships to the aid of a sinking ship. But, for wireless telegraphy to be of real use, it was absolutely necessary for one operator to remain on duty. So a bunk had been rigged up for Fenton in the wireless room, and he lay there, listening idly to the messages that flashed from ship to ship, none of them intended for him.

"Buzz...buzz...buzz..." There were times when it meant nothing to him at all. There were times when he hardly listened, so wearying was the repetition of the same colourless sounds. He rubbed his eyes, and picked up a newspaper near him. For the third time that day he read a paragraph that

interested him a great deal.

"Well," he said to himself at last, "I don't suppose I shall ever live to hear it."

His remark referred to the paragraph he had just read. There was a certain scientist, a Professor Fessenden, who had been working for a long time on the wireless telephone. By means of this invention, Fessenden hoped to be able to send "over the air" not only the dots and dashes of the Morse code, but human speech—as plainly as by ordinary telephone. It was just possible, Fenton admitted to himself. It might happen some day.....

A young man entered the wireless room. It was Fenton's fellow operator, Roberts. He came across to Fenton's bunk.

"I say, Fenton, old chap, it's real bad luck for you to be laid up like this. Just at Christmas time, too. The boys are having a bit of a celebration, seeing that it's Christmas Eve. They told me they sent you their best wishes, and said they hoped you were enjoying yourself."

"Ah, well, grinned Fenton, "it might be worse. Has the skipper said anything more about pudding to-morrow?....You know, Roberts, the odd thing about being laid up like this is that it makes you think of—of home, you know. There's a tune I used to hear that has been running in my head all day. I suppose it's just because of the time of the year. Christmas, and so on."

"Cheer up, old fellow. You're feeling down, that's what's the matter with you. What are you reading?"

"Ah, that's something. I've been wanting to show you. This wireless-telephone business. Do you think we'll ever hear anything over the ether but dots and dashes? It *would* be a change, you know. Something to listen to. Voices in the air, and all that sort of thing. I get a bit tired of Bill's voice, and Skipper's voice, and...."

Fenton broke off suddenly. His face worked. He sat upright in his bunk.

"What's the matter?" inquired Roberts, jumping to his feet.

"A general call has gone out," muttered the other. "It's from Brant Rock, Massachusetts."

Roberts seized his own earphones. He listened for a moment, and then stared at his companion.

"Do you hear what I hear?" he asked.

Fenton nodded.

Clearly, quite unmistakably, there came to their ears the voice of a woman singing. The two operators remained motionless through the whole song, and even when it ended they did not stir. A reading of verse followed, and then a violin solo.

As the sounds of music came to their ears, Roberts saw his friend stiffen with excitement. He listened with rapt attention. When the music was finished he said:

"Roberts! That music they played! That's the tune I've been hearing all day. Simply couldn't get it out of my head. I——"

"Wait, Fenton," said Roberts. "I'm still trying to listen."

There was little more. There was a short speech, and an invitation to all wireless operators to report on the broadcast, and to say how far they were away when they heard it. Then the concert came to an end.

Fenton and Roberts gazed at each other, unable to speak. Something miraculous had happened. For the first time in their lives on board a ship, they had known the weird but comforting experience of hearing voices from the world outside.

There was a sound in the doorway, and a head was thrust in.

"Hallo, Fenton!" It was the Skipper's gruff voice. "So there you are! Not much of a Christmas for you, I'm afraid. How's the ankle? You here, Roberts?....Why, what's the matter with you two? Don't tell me you've had a distress signal. Quick, speak up! Where's the fire?"

"Everything's all right, sir," replied Fenton. "But the fact is, we—we've heard voices!"

The skipper grinned.

"I can tell Christmas ghost stories, too," he said. "I used to know a lot of them once....Well, good night to you." He turned on his heel and walked away.

And the two men who had heard the first wireless-telephone broadcast gazed at each other, still unable to believe their ears.

## 1922. THE WONDER OF THE CRYSTAL SET

"I'm sure I can't get anything," said Father with



a sigh. "It's your turn, Tommy. Here, take the earphones!"

Tommy took them eagerly. He placed them over his head, and tried to adjust them so that they should not flatten his ears. "Now what do I do, Father?" he asked.

"First of all, you lift the 'cat's whisker,' and touch it lightly on the Crystal," said his father. "You've got to find the Sensitive Spot."

Tommy did so. Attached to a holder on the weird instrument before him, was a spiral of very thin wire. This was called the "cat's-whisker." Lifting it reverently, Tommy placed the end of the spiral on the crystal and listened, slowly turning the knob which was the other important feature of the instrument. Like his father he could hear nothing.

"Perhaps there isn't a Sensitive Spot, Dad," he suggested at last.

"There must be somewhere," declared his father. "The thing's guaranteed to work."

"Do you think the 'aerial' is all right?" asked Tommy presently.

"I'll go and see." It was the family's first experiment with wireless, and Father was taking it rather seriously. He went out into the garden to see if all was well there. The aerial, a double length of wire, was stretched high between two poles, and was carefully protected by insulators. From it ran a wire called a "lead-in." This wire was rather important. If it touched against anything on its way to the house and to the set, then you could be sure you

would hear nothing.

Indoors, Tommy bent over the crystal-set. There wasn't much of it. There was a plug where the "aerial" went in, and another where the "earth" came out; two terminals for attaching the earphones to the set; and the crystal and "cat's-whisker" already mentioned. There were no batteries or valves, and the instructions to the listener were quite simple. "Twiddle the knob," as Tommy's elder brother put it, "tickle the crystal with the 'cat's-whisker,' and hope for the best."

Tommy hoped.

Father came back. "No wonder," he said. "The aerial was touching the gutter. Try again, Tommy."

Tommy tried. He twiddled the knob as before. His father watched his face anxiously.

Suddenly Tommy sat up in his chair, as if he had received an electric shock. "I heard it!" he exclaimed excitedly. "I heard it!"

"You did!" cried his father. "Are you sure?"

"Quite sure! Oh, Mother," cried Tommy as his mother entered the room. "I heard it—as plain as anything!"

Tommy sprang up and ran to his mother. He had forgotten that the earphones were attached to the set. As he ran, they slipped from his head and clattered to the floor.

"What was it like? What did you hear?" cried both parents at once.

"It was as clear as anything—you couldn't mistake it!" cried Tommy, jumping about happily. "It

came over beautifully."

"But what was it?" insisted the two parents.

"Well, it wasn't very much. It was what you might call a—a squeak, you know. Or perhaps it was a squawk. I'm not sure. But the great thing is—the *set works!*"

Such was listening-in in 1922, the year when regular broadcasting began. Wireless was the new plaything, looked upon with suspicion by those who had not bought sets, and often with disgust by those who had. The most usual set was the crystal-set, which could be operated without a licence; but richer people were able to afford valve sets with one or two valves. Tremendous aerials, with various arrangements to prevent loss of signal strength, were erected in back gardens. Enthusiastic young men built sets for their neighbours, or opened shops to sell queer-looking coils, insulators, and pieces of copper and wire. There even began to be some talk of loudspeakers.

But the majority of people listened-in by ear-phones, waited patiently for their squawks, and—like Tommy—were pleased and thrilled when they got them!

\* \* \* \* \*

There is little need to tell the story of wireless beyond the year 1922. No sooner were valve-sets fairly launched, than the horn loudspeaker came

along to put an end to earphones. Horn loudspeakers were followed by the cone speakers we use to-day. The use of a greater number of valves led to improved performance, and also helped the sets to "get" more stations. Nowadays we have sets which are capable of receiving stations all over the world, and improvements in set design are still being made.

Now television is making rapid strides: soon we shall be "looking-in" as well as "listening-in." The story of wireless cannot end. But it can be added to, and it is being added to, year by year.

### NOTES

**Guglielmo Marconi:** the Italian inventor of Wireless Telegraphy. His earliest experiments were carried out in England and he crossed the Atlantic in order to experiment with long-distance transmitting. To this day, the commercial company which bears Marconi's name is an English company.

Marconi was later given the title of Marchese (Marquess) by the King of Italy. He died in 1939.

**insulated wires:** wires covered with cotton and rubber to prevent loss of current.

**Morse code:** a signalling code in which the letters of the alphabet are expressed by means of dots and dashes.

**straight lines:** if wireless waves did not follow the curve of the earth's surface, they could not be picked up at great distances, because they would be travelling away from the earth.

**Voices in the Air:** up to this time, wireless signals could only be sent in Morse code; it was a great advance when ordinary sounds, such as music and the human voice could be transmitted.

**bunk:** bed on a ship.

**hatchway:** an opening on the deck of ship where a staircase emerges.

**general call:** a "general call" is a call issued by a station that wishes to get in touch with all ships within range.

**The Crystal Set:** this is the story of what happened in many homes all over the world when ordinary people first began to buy wireless sets in their earliest and simplest form.

### EXERCISES

1. Write an essay on the benefits which Wireless has bestowed on the world.

2. Describe your own first experiences with a wireless set.

3. Answer the following questions:

(a) What is the difference between the wireless telegraph and the wireless telephone?

(b) How did Marconi prove that wireless waves travelled in curves?

(c) Why did the men on ships welcome the sound of voices and music on the wireless?

(d) What was the earliest type of popular wireless set and how did it work?

(e) What is the latest development of Marconi's invention and what does it do?

4. (a) Make the following verbs into nouns:

arrive, receive, insulate, repeat, bridge, refer, move, hold, protect, listen.

(b) Express the following phrases in single words:

come in; send out; become worse; listen to; far away; come out; build up; add to.

## QUILLER-COUCH

SIR ARTHUR THOMAS QUILLER-COUCH (born 1863) who writes under the pen-name "Q" is one of the best known of living essayists and story-writers. As Professor of English Literature at Cambridge, he played a great part in the development of the study of English Literature and was for some time in charge of the new edition of Shakespeare which is being produced. He is also famous as the editor of the *Oxford Book of English Verse* and many other similar collections. As a novelist and story-writer he concentrated his attention on his native Cornwall and has produced a large number of attractive works dealing with that countryside.

The present extract is taken from "*The Roll Call of Honour*" in which he has selected nine examples of heroines of comparatively recent times.

Florence Nightingale (1820-1910) was the daughter of an English country gentleman and even as a young girl she took a great interest in the people of her father's estate. She later came under the influence of Elizabeth Fry, the great prison reformer, and decided to devote her life to the reform of hospital nursing. You will see for yourselves in the following extract something of the conditions which she set out to improve. That she succeeded in her object is obvious today from the fact that no profession, not even the medical, is more revered by everyone than that of nursing.

The incidents described here took place chiefly during the Crimean War between England, France and Turkey on the one side and Russia on the other, on the small Crimean peninsula on the Black Sea.

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 THE LADY OF THE LAMP

## (i) THE CRIMEAN WAR

A NATION which elects to be bellicose should first take care that it is military—which means, to be thoughtfully prepared for war, from its strategy down to the last details of commissariat and hospital. British people in 1854 vainly supposed that all could be done by bayonet-thrusting; but the troops were

scarcely landed before dismal stories reached home of our unpreparedness in all these details. Mr. (afterwards Sir) William Howard Russell, the famous war correspondent for the *Times*, reached our first encampment at Gallipoli on the Dardanelles, to note with shame the completeness of the French arrangements—"hospitals for the sick, bread and biscuit bakeries, wagon trains for carrying stores and baggage, every necessary and every comfort"—as compared with ours.

"In every respect the French can teach us a lesson in these matters. While our sick men have not a mattress to lie down upon, and are literally without blankets, the French are well provided for. We have no medical comforts—none were forwarded from Malta."

From Gallipoli to Scutari on the Bosphorus, and from Scutari to Varna, these complaints, as we follow Russell's letters, grow steadily more serious. The French have admirably organised their postal service; ours has broken down.

"I regret very much to have to state that for several days last week there was neither rice nor sugar, no preserved potatoes nor tea, nor any substitute for these articles, issued to the men; they had, therefore, to make their breakfast simply on ration brown bread and water. After breakfast they were paraded and exercised for an hour or two in the hot sun (on one occasion for more than four hours), and the result has been that sickness increased rapidly. The dinners of the men consisted

of lean ration beef boiled in water and eaten with brown bread, without any seasoning to flavour it. The supplies ran out, and it was no fault of the commissariat that they did so. Who was to blame? I don't pretend to say."

Thus fed, and herded in insanitary camps, the men were soon attacked by dysentery, then by cholera, and began to drop off like flies; this, be it observed, long before they had so much as caught sight of the enemy. On September the 14th and 15th they were disembarked from ships upon the shore of the Crimea, and, still before a blow has been struck, we read:

"It is clear that neither afloat nor on shore is the medical staff nearly sufficient. I myself saw men dying on the beach, on the line of march, and in bivouac, and this within hail of a fleet of five hundred sail, and within sight of headquarters."

The battle of the Alma was fought on the 21st. After the victory:

"When I was looking at the wounded men going off today, I could not see an English ambulance. Our men were sent to the sea, three miles distant, on jolting *arabas* or tedious litters. The French had well-appointed covered hospital vans, to hold ten or twelve men, drawn by fine mules, and their wounded were sent in much greater comfort than our poor fellows, so far as I saw."

Above all, the French had nurses—Sisters of Mercy—women trained at home in convents for the work—who in camp and hospital moved from



stretcher to stretcher, from bed to bed, administering food and medicines, allaying the tortures of the wounded. Our men had no such help. Russell's descriptions culminated in this appeal in the *Times* :

"Are there no devoted women amongst us able and willing to go forth to minister to the sick and suffering soldiers of the East in the hospitals of Scutari? Are none of the daughters in England, at this extreme hour of need, ready for such a work of mercy? France has sent forth her Sisters of Mercy unsparingly, and they are even now by the bedsides of the wounded and the dying, giving what woman's hand alone can give of comfort and relief. Must we fall so far below the French in self-sacrifice and devotedness in a work which Christ so signally blesses as done unto Himself? '*I was sick and ye visited Me.*'"

Russell's appeal did not fall on deaf ears. In a few days hundreds of Englishwomen of all ranks were flooding the War Office with letters, beseeching leave to go out to Scutari as nurses. But these things can only be ready on the call of war through slow preparation in times of peace. All the gold in the treasury cannot produce at command these great qualities in administrative and executive departments—which are the fruits of experience alone. A soldier, an artillery man, a commissariat officer, cannot be created suddenly, no matter how profuse may be your expenditure in the attempt.

So it was with the nurses. These patriotic Englishwomen lacked one thing only—a capacity to fulfil

the services they were burning to undertake. They had received no training ; they knew nothing of hospital duty, less than nothing of hospital organisation. In 1854, one may fairly say a gently nurtured lady would sooner have offered herself to be a char-woman than to be a nurse. In our Protestant land the vocation of a Sister of Mercy, or of anything like it, did not fall within the dreams even of women devoted to religion.

### (ii) A STRANGE COINCIDENCE

These shoals of letters reached the War Office in due course, and were submitted to her Majesty's Secretary of State for War, who happened to be a remarkable man.

The Hon'ble Sidney Herbert was one of the most fascinating men in Europe. Of him Gladstone said : "He was one of whom we may well recite words that the great poet of this country has applied to a prince of an early history, cut off by death earlier than his countrymen would have desired—

A sweeter and a lovelier gentleman,  
Framed in the prodigality of nature,  
The spacious world cannot again afford."

Such in 1854 was the Minister for War, who of a sudden found himself bombarded by hundreds of letters from Englishwomen begging to be sent out to the Crimea, all burning to devote themselves, but all alike ignorant of the terrible duty they sought. Herbert's trained mind too surely perceived their incompetence as he read and rejected appeal after appeal. Where, in all this well-meaning hysteria, was

any sign of capacity, of grasp, of power to lead and to organize? He could find none. Was there in England, then, no one woman endowed with strength of character for the task, and prepared by training with the skill for it? Yes, there was one—a gently nurtured lady and (as it happened) an honoured friend of his; one who for some years had studied nursing and knew more of its realities than did all these frenzied petitioners put together. His thoughts turned to her. Amid the hubbub of patriotism she had kept silence and made no sign, simply because she knew, while others did not, the magnitude of the difficulty. He felt that, unless she volunteered, he could not ask her to take her life in her hands, to brave the cholera, the hardships, the exposure, the breaking toil, and, worse than these, the certainty of slanderous criticism from folk, who as public opinion then was, would cry aloud at the bare idea of a “Lady going out to nurse common soldiers.”

This lady was Miss Florence Nightingale. To her the War Minister’s thoughts kept turning. He knew her intimately. He spoke to his colleagues in the Cabinet, and received their promise that if Miss Nightingale would undertake this work she should be given undisputed control, and be supported by the government. They promised, indeed, readily enough, but still he hesitated to write to her. If she went to Scutari, she would take her life in her hands. Could he ask this sacrifice? He decided that a heart so noble as Florence Nightingale’s would perhaps

never forgive him if he denied this noble opportunity. On the 15th of October, he sat down and wrote the fateful letter. After telling her of the lack of nurses at Scutari, and the number of offers he received daily from volunteers "who have no conception of what a hospital is," he went on:—

"There is but one person in England that I know of who would be capable of organizing and superintending such a scheme. And I have been several times on the point of asking you if, supposing the attempt was made, you would undertake to direct it.... My question simply is, Would you listen to the request to go out and supervise the whole thing? You would, of course, have plenary authority over all the nurses, and I think I could secure you the fullest assistance and co-operation from the medical staff, and you would also have an unlimited power of drawing on the government for the success of your mission..... I do not say one word to press you; yet I must not conceal from you that upon your decision will depend the ultimate success or failure of the plan. There is one point which I have hardly a right to touch upon, but I trust you will pardon me. If you were inclined to undertake the great work, would Mr. and Mrs. Nightingale consent? The work would be so national, and the request made to you proceeding from the government, your position would ensure the respect and consideration of every one. This would secure you any attention or comfort on your way out there, together with a complete submission to your orders.

I know these things are a matter of indifference to you, except so far as may further the great object you may have in view; but they are of importance in themselves, and of every importance to those who have a right to take an interest in your personal position and comfort. God grant it may be one in accordance with my hopes.—Believe me, dear Miss Nightingale.

Ever yours,  
Sidney Herbert."

It so happened that, while Herbert was writing this letter, Florence Nightingale was seated in her garden pondering Russell's appeal: "Are there no devoted women amongst us, willing and able to go forth and minister to the sick and suffering soldiers of the East?" Hundreds were willing enough, she knew. But what of the ability she had been preaching—preaching for years? Was *she* able? Yes, if God would lend her strength.

She walked back to the house, and wrote to Sidney Herbert offering her services. Their letters crossed.

### (iii) THE "ANGEL BAND"

In just one week from that 15th of October, and while the public were still asking, "Who is Miss Nightingale?" she had her first batch of thirty-eight nurses marshalled and ready to start with her. This first contingent was made up of fourteen Church of England Sisters, ten Roman Catholic Sisters of Mercy, three chosen by Lord Maria Forrester (who had been forming an independent plan for sending

nurses to Scutari), and eleven selected from the miscellaneous volunteers who had answered the advertisement. A Mr. and Mrs. Bracebridge, two particular friends, accompanied the expedition; a clergyman and a courier completed it. The "Angel Band" left London on the evening of October 21st. A few friends and kinsfolk had gathered at the railway station to see them off. She had wished for a quiet departure. Quietly dressed, she said her farewells with a calm smile of confidence meant to hearten those she left behind. Her own heart foreboded only too well the task that lay before her.

They reached Boulogne early morning, to meet with a surprising reception. France was our ally in this war. Word of these good women and their mission had preceded them across the Channel, they were met on the quay by a crowd of Boulogne fishwives who seized their trunks, and jostled and almost came to blows over the privilege of carrying their luggage on board the train. Tears ran down the faces of these honest women as they shouldered the boxes and staggered with them across the rails. Some gabbled messages to be conveyed to sons and husbands afar at the seat of war. Not one sou would any one accept, but hand-shakes again and again, and the train steamed out of the station amid cries of *Vivent les sœurs!*

After a short halt at Paris with the Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul, the party took train again for Marseilles, their port of embarkation, and here again the porters declined any fee for their services. The

*Vectis*, a steamship of the Peninsular Line, awaited them, and through terrible weather she drove her way eastward to Malta, which was reached on October 31st. Here the nurses transhipped, and reached Scutari on November 4th, the day before the battle of Inkerman.

#### (iv) THE HOSPITAL AT SCUTARI

The barrack hospital at Scutari stood on a hill overlooking the waterway of the Bosphorus, which by common consent is one of the loveliest scenes in the world. The building itself was palatial—an enormous quadrangle, each side of it close upon a quarter of a mile in length. Its galleries and corridors made up a total extent of four miles, and in the vast central court no less than twelve thousand men could be deployed. No hospital could appear more desirable—until one entered it and found a scene of filth and confusion not to be described. To right and left of the interminable corridors the wounded lay in closely packed rows, the majority of them with wounds undressed and fractured limbs still unset, although days had elapsed since they left the battlefield. Many were starving; all lacked the barest decencies of life.

“There were no vessels for water or utensils of any kind; no soap, towels or cloths, no hospital clothes; the men lying in their uniforms, stiff with gore and covered with filth to a degree and of a kind no one could write about; their persons covered with vermin, which crawled about the floors and walls

of the dreadful den of dirt, pestilence, and death."

After landing at the ferry below, the sufferers crawled or were dragged up the hill to reach the hospital and lie amid these horrors upon polluted beds, between sheets of canvas so coarse that many begged to be left in their blankets. At nights when the wards were lit only by the glimmer of candles stuck in empty beer-bottles, rats would venture out and bite the weakest of the sufferers, drawing blood; for the rats too were starving. One of Miss Nightingale's first actions on entering the place, was to dislodge a Scutari rat from above a bed with the point of her umbrella. Another was the removal of six dead and decomposing dogs she had counted close beneath the windows.

She arrived on November 4th. Next day was fought the hand-to-hand 'soldiers' battle' of Inkerman; and before she could begin to cope with the miseries already about her, more were steadily accumulated, day after day and all day long, by the streams of wounded men pouring up from the ferry as the warships disembarked them, many bringing fever and cholera besides their wounds. They packed every inch of space in the vast hospital; many had to lie on the muddy ground outside, waiting until comrades died within and so made room. Medical stores had been sent out by the ton weight, never to reach Scutari. They lay rotting on the shore at Varna, or had been packed in the holds of vessels *beneath* heavy guns and ammunition. These disasters culminated on November 14th, when the



*Prince* transport, laden with stores, went ashore and was broken up in a furious hurricane.

These were the days—when all seemed hopeless—that really proved Florence Nightingale; days when she was known to stand for twenty hours at a time, dealing with fresh detachments of sick as they arrived, apportioning quarters, directing the nurses to their duties. She and her staff had taken up their quarters in a tower at a corner of the great quadrangle, and from her room by little and little the presence of an organising brain began to make itself felt along the miles of galleries. Fortunately, government had given her full authority to back up her own power of command. The orderlies found they could not scamp their work of inspecting the wards. Woe to one who brought a false report that all was right when Miss Nightingale, who had a knack of finding things out, cross-questioned him and discovered that all was wrong! The orderlies indeed soon became her devoted knights, and endured for her sake toils and vigils that far outwent their “official” duties.

Even in those terrible early days she personally attended to scores of the worst operations. But for a time her work was done in the turret chamber, whence, as from the “conning tower” of a modern battleship, the brain in command sent out its orders, bringing system out of confusion. A helpless kitchen, in which the vats seethed with offal that would have disgraced a soap factory, was reduced to cleanliness, to order, finally to such efficiency that in one day it

would turn out thirteen gallons of chicken broth and forty gallons of arrowroot for the sick, with plenty of well-cooked food for the convalescent. Distributors of government stores had to mend their ways and be punctual. A Levantine who had the washing contract, and broke it so repeatedly that two or three thousand sick lay without a change of linen, found himself superseded. In the course of the first three months Miss Nightingale, from her own resources and her friends', provided ten thousand shirts. Next she set up a laundry in a house hard by the hospital, and had it fitted with ample coppers in which five hundred shirts, to name no other articles, were washed each week. Her nurses were never idle. What time could be spared from the bedsides of the sufferers was employed in tearing up the bandages—miles of bandages—making lint, fashioning splints, sewing mattresses and pillows.

Fifty additional nurses arrived with the New Year, and were drafted out on various services; for Scutari had a "general" as well as a "barrack" hospital, and there was the Kullali hospital, across the Bosphorus, and temporary ones at the front. The war had by this time settled down to a sullen siege of Sebastopol, and men were dying now, not of wounds, but from exposure in the icy trenches where sometimes they spent thirty-six hours at a stretch, starved of rations, sleeping—when sleep overtook them—on the frozen mud. Cholera devastated them.

"The cholera was of the very worst type, and the

attacked men lasted only four or five hours. Oh, those dreadful cramps! You might as well try to bend a piece of iron as to move those joints."

Against these cramps, as the sufferers were landed after tossing for a day or two on the Black Sea, nurses and orderlies worked heroically, wrapping the patients in blankets steeped in boiling water and sprinkled with chloroform. A very small proportion survived. Streams of stretchers bringing in the stricken men passed streams of stretchers carrying out the dead. There were the frost-bitten too, from whose feet the boots had to be cut off bit by bit, flesh coming away with the leather. For two months the death-rate stood at 60 per cent. Still fighting through the worst, Florence Nightingale, after the orderlies had retired to snatch some rest, would go her round, lamp in hand, along the endless galleries, moving from bed to bed, here pausing to soothe the delirium of a poor fellow, who fancied himself still storming Sebastopol, there taking (and never forgetting) the last message of the dying. As she passed, still holding her lamp, sick men raised themselves to kiss her shadow on their pillows.

How valuable her life was just then could be seen in the consternation that swept through the whole army a few days later, upon a report that Miss Nightingale had taken the Crimean fever. It was true. She had overtaxed her strength in visiting and reorganising the Balaklava hospitals, and the fever had seized upon her weakness. For twelve days she lay dangerously ill, and on her recovery

the doctors advised her returning at once to England. But she would not hear of it, and demanded to be taken back to Scutari, intending, as soon as her convalescence was assured, to return to Balaklava, and take up again the task of reforming the hospitals.

(v) THE HEROINE OF THE CRIMEAN WAR

When peace was in sight, amid the general rejoicings at home people were asking how best the nation could show its gratitude to the heroine of the war. Already Queen Victoria, anticipating the wish of her people, had put this question to Sidney Herbert. This was his answer:—

49, BELGRAVE SQUARE  
*July 1855*

“Madam,—There is but one testimonial which would be accepted by Miss Nightingale. The one wish of her heart has long been to found a hospital in London, and to work it on her own system of unpaid nursing; and I have suggested to all who have been asking my advice in this matter to pay any sums that they may feel disposed to give, or that they may be able to collect, into Messrs. Coutts’ Bank, where a subscription list for the purpose is about to be opened, to be called the ‘Nightingale Hospital Fund’—the sum subscribed to be presented to her on her return home, which will enable her to carry out her object regarding the reform of the nursing system in England.”

The scheme was inaugurated at a public meeting held at Will’s rooms on November 29, the Duke of

Cambridge presiding. At the meeting Sidney Herbert told a story that had reached him from a simple soldier, saved from death in the Scutari Hospital. "She would speak to one and another," he said, "and nod and smile to many more; but she could not do it to all, you know, for we lay there by hundreds. But we could kiss her shadow as it fell, and lay our heads on the pillow again content."

Florence Nightingale received from Queen Victoria a beautiful jewel with the following letter:—

WINDSOR CASTLE  
January 1856

"Dear Miss Nightingale,—You are, I know, well aware of the high sense I entertain of the Christian devotion which you have displayed during this great and bloody war, and I need hardly repeat to you how warm my admiration is for your services, which are fully equal to those of my dear and brave soldiers, whose sufferings you have had the *privilege* of relieving in so merciful a manner. I am, however, anxious of making my feelings in a manner which I trust will be agreeable to you, and therefore send you with this letter a brooch, the form and emblems of which commemorate your great and blessed work, and which I hope you will wear as a mark of the high approbation of your Sovereign!

"It will be a very great satisfaction to me, when you return at last to these shores, to make the acquaintance of one who has set so bright an example to our sex. And with every prayer for the preser-

vation of your valuable health, believe me, always  
yours sincerely,

VICTORIA R. "

When at length Florence Nightingale's time had come to return, she took every precaution to avoid a public demonstration. She declined the government's offer of a British man-of-war to bring her home, and travelling privately under an assumed name reached England unrecognised, and proceeded to her home, at Lea Hurst, where she arrived on August 8. While the land rang with her praises, she remained quietly with her family, nursing her strength back, that she might next take charge of the great nursing movement on which her heart was set. But this was not to be. The malady from which she suffered increased its hold, and to her bitter disappointment she realized that her life's active work was done.

But the movement went forward, never lacking inspiration in the memory of her good deeds, or words of shrewd and kindly advice from the writing-room in which she lived as a recluse. Books came from her pen—*Notes on Hospitals* in 1859, and *Notes on Nursing* in 1860. Towards the close of her long life, honours were showered on her. Her true reward, however, lay in the abiding gratitude of a nation; in that, and in the fidelity with which Englishmen who followed the path she had found and carried more and more light to the dark places of human misery—as the Roman vestals tended one fire, never suffering it to die out night or day—turned

over to "the Lady of the Lamp" to bless and kindle their beneficent torches. "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." If such a light shine today in our great cities and in thousands of villages, it has grown and spread from the tiny flame borne by Florence Nightingale from ward to ward along the awful galleries of Scutari.

"So in that house of misery  
A lady with a lamp I see  
    Pass through the glimmering gloom,  
    And flit from room to room.

And slowly, as in a dream of bliss,  
The speechless sufferer turns to kiss  
    Her shadow as it falls  
    Upon the darkening walls.

On England's annals, through the long  
Hereafter of her speech and song,  
    A light its ray shall cast  
    From portals of the past.

A lady with a lamp shall stand  
In the great history of the land—  
    A noble type of good  
    Heroic womanhood."

#### NOTES

**bellicose** : anxious to fight.

**seasoning** : salt, pepper and spices which help to make food pleasant to eat.

**Sisters of Mercy** : an order of Roman Catholic Nuns who undertake the work of nurses.

**signally** : in such a marked manner.

**commissariat officer** : an officer in charge of supplies of provisions for the army.

**charwoman :** a woman employed to do the rough work of the house.

**Protestant land :** the Church of England at that time did not recognise any orders of Nuns.

**vocation :** a technical term meaning a religious call to a particular kind of work.

**A sweeter and a lovelier gentleman..... :** Shakespeare, Richard III, Act 1, Sc. II, lines 242 to 245, (Richard refers to Edward, Prince of Wales).

**plenary :** full, unlimited.

**The Angel Band :** "angel" comes from the Greek word meaning messenger and has come to mean one of the higher order of spirits who bring help and comfort from Heaven to earth. The first band of nurses must have seemed like these to the people of their time.

**Sisters :** members of an order of nuns.

**courier :** one who accompanies parties of travellers to help them on their journey.

**sou :** half-penny.

**Vivent les sœurs :** "Long live the Sisters."

**palatial :** Like a palace.

**scamp their work :** do it carelessly and with the minimum effort.

**vigils :** periods of watching at night by the side of a sick bed.

**vats :** large tubs, vessels or cisterns for holding liquids.

**seethed :** boiled; bubbled.

**offal :** refuse and waste matter.

**A helpless kitchen....a soap factory :** Here the uncared-for and unclean large cooking vessels in the disorderly kitchen are compared to the much used vats in which oil, fat or grease boil with lye or caustic soda in a soap factory, as they present a very unclean and messy appearance.

**Levantine :** a person belonging to one of the races of the Eastern Mediterranean.

**brooch (pronounce, broach) :** a jewelled pin worn by ladies.

**Roman Vestals :** the Vestal Virgins were women who devoted their lives to the service of the gods in ancient Rome.

## EXERCISES

1. Describe as accurately as you can the condition of the hospitals before the arrival of Miss Nightingale.

2. What changes have occurred in the nursing profession since the time of the Crimean War ?

3. Give an estimate of the life's work of Florence Night-



ingale and compare her work with that of any other great woman reformer.

4. Answer the following questions:

- (a) What was the attitude in England at the time to the question of providing nurses?
- (b) How did the War Minister face the situation brought about by the Crimean War?
- (c) Who really brought the question to the notice of the country and how did he do it?
- (d) How did the Queen honour Miss Nightingale?
- (e) How did the nation honour her?
- (f) Why was she called "The Lady of the Lamp"?
- (g) What work did she do when she returned to England?
- (h) What was the result of that work?

5. Write an essay on "Nursing as a Profession."

6. Express each of the following phrases in one word: that part of the army which arranges the supply of food.

a carriage for a sick or wounded person.

a man who betrays his country.

the amount of food allotted to a soldier each day.

a place where the sick are looked after.

a call to carry out a special work.

7. Use the following words and phrases in sentences of your own to show that you fully understand their meanings: quadrangle, ward, delirium, convalescence, by common consent, to cope with, at a stretch, to break out.

8. (a) Form adjectives from the following:

palace, dirt, vigil, convalesce, sister, vermin, frost-bite.

confuse, decent, efficient, devastate, grateful.

(b) Form nouns from the following:

move, devoted.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES (1809-94) was one of the most famous American writers of essays and miscellaneous prose in the nineteenth century. He turned his attention to many subjects, social, political and literary but here he is teaching us a universal moral lesson, and he does so by means of a parable; that is, by using common everyday facts to illustrate a moral truth.

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TRUTH AND ERROR

DID you never, in walking in the fields, come across a large flat stone, which had lain, nobody knows how long, just where you found it, with the grass forming a little hedge, as it were, all round it, close to its edges,—and have you not, in obedience to a kind of feeling that told you it had been lying there long enough, insinuated your stick or your foot or your fingers under its edge and turned it over as a housewife turns a cake, when she says to herself, “It’s done brown enough by this time”? What an odd revelation, and what an unforeseen and unpleasant surprise to a small community, the very existence of which you had not suspected, until the sudden dismay and scattering among its members produced by your turning the old stone over ! Blades of grass flattened down, colourless, matted together, as if they had been bleached and ironed; hideous crawling creatures, some of them coleopterous or horny-shelled,—turtle-bugs one wants to call them; some of them softer, but cunningly spread out and compressed like Lepine watches; (Nature never

loses a crack or a crevice, mind you, or a joint in a tavern bedstead, but she always has one of her flat-pattern live timekeepers to slide into it;) black, glossy crickets, with their long filaments sticking out like the whips of four-horse stage-coaches; motionless slug-like creatures, young larvæ, perhaps more horrible in their pulpy stillness than even in the infernal wriggle of maturity! But no sooner is the stone and the wholesome light of day let upon this compressed and blinded community of creeping things, than all of them which enjoy the luxury of legs—and some of them have a good many—rush round wildly, butting each other and everything in their way, and end in a general stampede for underground retreats from the region poisoned by sunshine. *Next year* you will find the grass growing tall and green where the stone lay; the ground-bird builds her nest where the beetle had its hole; the dandelion and the buttercup are growing there, and the broad fans of insect-angels open and shut over their golden disks, as the rhythmic waves of blissful consciousness pulsate through their glorified being.

—The young fellow whom they call John saw fit to say, in his very familiar way,—at which I do not choose to take offence, but which I sometimes think it necessary to repress,—that I was coming it rather strong on the butterflies.

No, I replied; there is meaning in each of those images,—the butterfly as well as the others. The stone is ancient error. The grass is human nature borne down and bleached of all its colour by it. The

shapes which are found beneath are the crafty beings that thrive in darkness, and the weaker organisms kept helpless by it. He who turns the stone over is whoever puts the staff of truth to the old lying incubus, no matter whether he do it with a serious face or a laughing one. The next year stands for the coming time. Then shall the nature which had lain blanched and broken rise in its full stature and native hues in the sunshine. Then shall God's minstrels build their nests in the hearts of a new-born humanity. Then shall beauty—Divinity taking outlines and colour—light upon the souls of men as the butterfly, image of the beatified spirit rising from the dust, soars from the shell that held a poor grub, which would never have found wings had not the stone been lifted.

You never need think you can turn over any old falsehood without a terrible squirming and scattering of the horrible little population that dwells under it.

### NOTES

**insinuated** : inserted into a small space. This is not the usual meaning of the word.

**filaments** : thread-like feelers.

**infernal** : devilish.

**broad fans of insect angels** : the wings of butterflies.

**pulsate** : throb.

**coming it rather strong** : exaggerating.

**incubus** : dead weight of evil.

### EXERCISES

1. Explain carefully and in your own words exactly what Holmes means by the parable of the stone.

2. Read through the essay again carefully and note any words, phrases or expressions which strike you as being poetical. See if you can find a reason for their use.

3. Write out any other parable with which you are acquainted and show what it is intended to teach.

4. Use the following phrases in sentences of your own to show that you understand their meaning:—

come across, spread out, take offence, stand for, light upon.

5. "What an odd revelation, and what an unforeseen surprise to a small community, the very existence of which you had not suspected, until the sudden dismay and scattering among its members produced by your turning the old stone over!"

(i) Split this sentence up into clauses and show their relationship to one another.

(ii) What kind of sentence is it?

(iii) Read through the essay and point out any similar sentences. Does their existence affect Holmes's style in any way?

## XII

### R. C. DUNCAN

BRIGADIER R. C. DUNCAN, M.V.O., O.B.E. belongs to an Army family. His father was a Lieut. General and his two brothers are Major Generals. He was educated at Wellington College and the Royal Military College. He joined the 5th Royal Gurkha Rifles as 2nd Lieut. in 1907, was Adjutant of the 2nd battalion of that regiment, and commanded it from 1932-36. He has taken part in several Frontier expeditions and during the last War was mentioned in despatches three times. He held several Staff appointments, was Officer-in-Charge of the King's Indian Orderly Officers 1929, and was attached to the Nepalese Mission to England in 1934. He is now Commandant, Jodhpur State Forces. He is the author of a novel entitled *Some Like the Hills*, a romance of the North-West Frontier of India.

The following is taken from a book entitled *Letters of a Soldier to his Son* in which Brigadier Duncan gives much valuable advice and also tells us a great deal about some of the ways in which the human mind works. Here we learn something about bravery which few people could teach us.

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### ON BRAVERY

MY DEAREST BOY,

I know you are rather nervous and imaginative, old boy. You inherited this from both your mother and me; but I do not ever want you to imagine, because you feel things possibly more than other people, because the sight of blood or the idea of having to go through an operation upsets you, that you are a coward in any sense of the word at all.

The coward is the man, who, feeling upset about doing a thing, does not do it whereas the man who, being of a nervous and imaginative nature, carries through with the doing of a thing which he dislikes, is a real brave man.

The doing or the not doing of an act is the deciding factor as to whether a man is a coward or a brave man.

A book which I have read over and over again, and which I always have with me, is *The Four Feathers* by A. E. W. Mason. I know you have read it.

Harry Feversham, from early boyhood, used to feel nervous, and you will remember that night round the dinner table, how the stories told by his father and his old friends about the Crimean days terrified him, and when he crept away to bed that night, even the darkness frightened him, and it was impossible for him to get the stories out of his head. His trial came many years later when his battalion was ordered on service, and he failed, but only for a short time, and the next few years of his life make good reading, and prove that actually he was as brave a man as it is possible to be.

So don't you run away with the idea that you are a coward, if the thought of unpleasant things is apt to disturb your mind. Nearly all the big people in this world—men who have done big things, and who have been leaders in their own particular line, have been men of sensitive nature and I am always pleased to think that you are not one of the stolid sort, who are unable to imagine things, and are unable to feel the anticipation of pain or beastliness.

I remember that there used to be a fine man in my Company—he was a N. C. O., and was quite one of the best men in the battalion. We went on

service, and the hours before we went into action he used to be literally shivering all over, and I knew he was feeling the awfulness of it all more than anyone else in the Company, and I understood it, as I was feeling rather like that myself. However, he never shirked his duty and he always came out of any action with the greatest credit. One time, he was really ill—I think it was malaria he had; anyhow it was a fever of sorts—but he refused to go sick, as it was on the eve of a battle and he was not going to be left out of it. Now, I call him a truly brave man—far braver than the man, who didn't feel things, who took things as they came, and also he was probably of far greater value to his side.

So don't you worry your head about being a bit nervous at times—before a battle, an operation, a tournament, or anything else which is apt to make one nervous before-hand; I am positive you will stand the test all right, and you will do as well as, or even better than the others.

YOUR DAD.

### EXERCISES

1. Give in your own words Brigadier Duncan's ideas about bravery. Do you agree with his opinions?

2. Imagine yourself to be a soldier just about to go into battle. Write a letter to your mother or father describing your feelings.

3. Write an account of any character in life, history or fiction who is famous (a) for his bravery (b) for his cowardice.

4. Read through this letter carefully and make a list of words and phrases which mark its style as "colloquial."

5. Explain the following terms by reference to a dictionary:—

company, N.C.O., battalion, operation, tournament.



## XIII

### ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON (1850-1894) poet, essayist, and novelist and altogether one of the most attractive writers of his own or any other period will always be best known to young people as the writer of some of the best adventure stories in the English language. Of these the best known are *Treasure Island*, *Kidnapped*, *Catriona* and *The Black Arrow*. In a rather different category, but equally famous is *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*.

He was one of the outstanding literary personalities of his time and his romantic life is well worth reading. As a writer of prose he is unrivalled. He carries his reader along with him whatever his subject and his simplicity both in narrative and description is a model which we do well to imitate.

*St. Ives* was the last story that Stevenson wrote and indeed, he never lived to complete it, the last chapters being supplied by Sir (then Mr.) Arthur Quiller-Couch. It is the story of the escape of a French prisoner of war, *St. Ives*, from Edinburgh Castle in the year 1813 and his subsequent adventure in England. This extract tells of his actual escape from the castle.

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### THE ESCAPE

THE time for our escape drew near, and the nearer it came the less we seemed to enjoy the prospect. There is but one side on which this castle can be left either with dignity or safety; but as there is the main gate and guard, and the chief street of the upper city, it is not to be thought of by escaping prisoners. In all other directions an abominable precipice surrounds it, down the face of which (if anywhere at all) we must regain our liberty. By our concurrent labours in many a dark night, working with the most anxious precautions against noise, we had made out to pierce below the curtain about

the south-west corner, in a place they call the *Devil's Elbow*. I have never met that celebrity; nor (if the rest of him at all comes up to what they called his elbow) have I the least desire of his acquaintance. From the heel of the masonry, the rascally break-neck precipice descended sheer among waste lands, scattered suburbs of the city, and houses in the building. I had never the heart to look for any length of time—the thought that I must make the descent in person some dark night robbing me of breath; and, indeed, on anybody not a seaman or a steeple-jack, the mere sight of the *Devil's Elbow* wrought like an emetic.

I don't know where the rope was got, and doubt if I much cared. It was not that which gravelled me, but whether, now that we had it, it would serve our turn. Its length, indeed, we made a shift to fathom out; but who was to tell us how that length compared with the way we had to go? . . .

It was a good deal of a relief when the third evening closed about the castle with volumes of sea-fog. The lights of Princes Street sometimes disappeared, sometimes blinked across at us no brighter than the eyes of cats; and five steps from one of the lanterns on the ramparts it was already groping dark. We made haste to lie down. Had our jailers been upon the watch, they must have observed our conversation to die out unusually soon. Yet I doubt if any of us slept. Each lay in his place, tortured at once with the hope of liberty and the fear of a hateful death. The guard call sounded; the hum of the

town declined by little and little. On all sides of us, in their different quarters, we could hear the watchman cry the hours along the street. Often enough, during my stay in England, have I listened to these gruff or broken voices; or perhaps gone to my window when I lay sleepless, and watched the old gentleman hobble by upon the causeway with his cape and his cap, his hanger and his rattle. It was ever a thought with me how differently that cry would re-echo in the chamber of lovers, beside the bed of death, or in the condemned cell. I might be said to hear it that night myself in the condemned cell! At length a fellow with a voice like a bull's began to roar out in the opposite thoroughfare:

‘Past yin o’cloak, and a dark, haary moarnin’.’

At which we were all silently afoot.

As I stole about the battlements towards the—gallows, I was about to write—the sergeant-major, perhaps doubtful of my resolution, kept close by me, and occasionally proffered the most indigestible reassurances in my ear. At last I could bear them no longer.

‘Be so obliging as to let me be!’ said I. ‘I am neither a coward nor a fool. What do *you* know of whether the rope be long enough? But I shall know it in ten minutes!’

The good old fellow laughed in his moustache, and patted me.

It was all very well to show the disposition of my temper before a friend alone; before my assembled comrades the thing had to go handsomely. It was

then my time to come on the stage; and I hope I took it handsomely.

‘Now, gentlemen,’ said I, ‘if the rope is ready, here is the criminal!’

The tunnel was cleared, the stake driven, the rope extended. As I moved forward to the place, many of my comrades caught me by the hand and wrung it, an attention I could well have done without.

‘Keep an eye on Clausel!’ I whispered to Laclas; and with that, got down on my elbows and knees, took the rope in both hands, and worked myself, feet foremost, through the tunnel. When the earth failed under my feet, I thought my heart would have stopped; and a moment after I was demeaning myself in mid-air like a drunken jumping-jack. I have never been a model of piety, but at this juncture prayers and a cold sweat burst from me simultaneously.

The line was knotted at intervals of eighteen inches; and to the inexpert it may seem as if it should have been even easy to descend. The trouble was, this devil of a piece of rope appeared to be inspired, not with life alone, but with a personal malignity against myself. It turned to the one side, paused for a moment, and then spun me like a toasting-jack to the other; slipped like an eel from the clasp of my feet; kept me all the time in the most outrageous fury of exertion; and dashed me at intervals against the face of the rock. I had no eyes to see with; and I doubt if there was anything to see but darkness. I must occasionally have caught a gasp of breath, but it was quite unconscious. And the whole forces

of my mind were so consumed with losing hold and getting it again, that I could scarce have told whether I was going up or coming down.

Of a sudden I knocked against the cliff with such a thump as almost bereft me of my sense; and, as reason twinkled back, I was amazed to find that I was in a state of rest, that the face of the precipice here inclined outwards at an angle which relieved me almost wholly of the burthen of my own weight, and that one of my feet was safely planted on a ledge. I drew one of the sweetest breaths in my experience, hugged myself against the rope, and closed my eyes in a kind of ecstasy of relief. It occurred to me next to see how far I was advanced on my unlucky journey, a point on which I had not a shadow of a guess. I looked up; there was nothing above me but the blackness of the night and the fog. I craned timidly forward and looked down. There, upon a floor of darkness, I beheld a certain pattern of hazy lights, some of them aligned as in thoroughfares, others standing apart as in solitary houses; and before I could well realize it, or had in the least estimated my distance, a wave of nausea and vertigo warned me to lie back and close my eyes. In this situation I had really but the one wish, and that was: something else to think of! Strange to say, I got it: a veil was torn from my mind, and I saw what a fool I was—what fools we had all been—and that I had no business to be thus dangling between earth and heaven by my arms. The only thing to have done was to have attached me to a rope and lowered

me, and I had never the wit to see it till that moment!

I filled my lungs, got a good hold on my rope, and once more launched myself on the descent. As it chanced, the worst of the danger was at an end, and I was so fortunate as to be never again exposed to any violent concussion. Soon after I must have passed within a little distance of a bush of wallflower, for the scent of it came over me with that impression of reality which characterizes scents in darkness. This made me a second landmark, the ledge being my first. I began accordingly to compute intervals of time: so much to the ledge, so much again to the wallflower, so much more below. If I were not at the bottom of the rock, I calculated I must be near indeed to the end of the rope, and there was no doubt that I was not far from the end of my own resources. I began to be light-headed and to be tempted to let go,—now arguing that I was certainly arrived within a few feet of the level and could safely risk a fall, anon persuaded I was still close at the top and it was idle to continue longer on the rock. In the midst of which I came to a bearing on plain ground, and had nearly wept aloud. My hands were as good as flayed, my courage entirely exhausted, and, what with the long strain and the sudden relief, my limbs shook under me with more than the violence of ague, and I was glad to cling to the rope.

But this was no time to give way. I had (by God's single mercy) got myself alive out of that fortress;

and now I had to try to get the others, my comrades.

### NOTES

**that celebrity**: the devil.

**steeple-jack**: a man whose trade is the repairing of church-spires and other very high buildings.

**emetic**: a medicine taken to produce vomiting.

**gravelled**: troubled (obsolete use).

**watchman**: a man whose duty it was to patrol the town by night and periodically to call out the time and the state of the weather.

**hanger**: short sword.

**"Past yin o'clock, and a dark, haary moarnin'"**: an attempt to reproduce Scotch dialect. Meaning — "Past one o'clock and a dark frosty morning."

**to come on the stage**: to begin to play my part in the escape.

**Clausel**: one of the prisoners who was an enemy of St. Ives and whose loyalty was doubtful.

**toasting-jack**: a piece of iron which could be turned round either by hand or clock-work and used for cooking before an open fire.

**nausea and vertigo**: sickness and giddiness.

**flayed**: skinned.

### EXERCISES

1. Give an account of what St. Ives felt as he was climbing down the rope.

2. Write an essay on any ancient fortress you have seen.

3. Imagine yourself held a prisoner and describe what efforts you would make to escape.

4. Take from the library "The Count of Monte Cristo" by Alexandre Dumas and read the story of the escape from prison contained there. Compare it with that of St. Ives.

5. Explain the meaning of the following:—

(a) The mere sight of the Devil's Elbow wrought like an emetic.

(b) "If the rope is ready, here is the criminal".

(c) "Keep an eye on Clausel."

(d) ....at this juncture prayers and a cold sweat burst from me simultaneously.

(e) My limbs shook under me with the violence of an ague.

6. Write out the first paragraph in the third person.

7. Read through the extract carefully and pick out any words that you have not seen used in prose before, particularly noting unusual uses of ordinary words such as wrought = worked; indigestible reassurances.

## XIV

### H. G. WELLS

H. G. WELLS (born 1866) is one of the most popular living writers of fiction. As he tells us in this essay, he began his literary career as a journalist and gained fame as a writer of popular semi-scientific novels, such as *The Time Machine*, *The War of the Worlds* and *The Invisible Man*. He also turned his attention to social questions and his *Mr. Polly* is a vivid and amusing account of the life of a typical member of the English lower middle class. A good many of the incidents and characters are based on his own early life.

In recent times Mr. Wells has devoted himself more and more to popular expositions of important social and political subjects.

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### AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL

I AM just now forty-two years old, and I was born in that queer indefinite class that we call in England the middle-class. I am not a bit aristocratic; I do not know any of my ancestors beyond my grandparents, and about them I do not know very much, because I am the youngest son of my father and mother, and their parents were all dead before I was born. My mother was the daughter of an inn-keeper at a place named Midhurst, who supplied post-horses to the coaches before the railways came; my father was the son of the head-gardener of Lord de Lisle at Penshurst Castle, in Kent. They had various changes of fortune and position; for most of his life my father kept a little shop in a suburb of London, and eked out his resources by playing a game called cricket, which is not only a pastime, but a show which people will pay to see, and which, therefore, affords a living for professional players.



His shop was unsuccessful, and my mother, who had once been a lady's-maid, became, when I was twelve years old, housekeeper in a large country house. I too was destined to be a shop-keeper. I left school at thirteen for that purpose. I was apprenticed first to a chemist, and, that proving unsatisfactory, to a draper. But after a year or so it became evident to me that the facilities for higher education that were and still are constantly increasing in England, offered me better chances in life than a shop and comparative illiteracy could do; and so I struggled for and got various grants and scholarships that enabled me to study and to take a degree in science and some mediocre honours in the new and now great and growing University of London... After I had graduated I taught biology for two or three years, and then became a journalist, partly because it is a more remunerative profession in England than teaching, but partly also because I had always taken the keenest interest in writing English. Some little kink in my mind has always made the writing of prose very interesting to me. I began first to write literary articles, criticism, and so forth, and presently short imaginative stories in which I made use of the teeming suggestions of modern science. There is a considerable demand for this sort of fiction in Great Britain and America, and my first book, *The Time Machine*, published in 1895, attracted considerable attention; and with two of its successors, *The War of the Worlds* and *The Invisible Man*, gave me a sufficient popularity to enable me to devote

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myself exclusively, and with a certain sense of security, to purely literary work.

### NOTES

**post-horses**: the innkeepers were responsible for supplying the relays for the coaches before the coming of the railways.

**draper**: a dealer in cloth, cotton fabrics and ladies' wear.

**lady's maid**: a servant whose duty it is to attend to the clothes and personal needs of a lady.

**mediocre**: neither high nor low. Mr. Wells did not have a distinguished academic career.

**kink**: literally a twist; hence, peculiarity.

### EXERCISES

1. By what stages did Mr. Wells reach his position as a popular novelist? What movement in England at this time made this possible?

2. Name any of Mr. Wells's books which you have read and describe the story.

3. Explain in your own words the meaning of the following phrases:—

middle-class; eked out his resources; apprenticed to a chemist; prove unsatisfactory; more remunerative profession.

## XV

### ARNOLD BENNETT

ARNOLD BENNETT (1867-1931) was a very popular novelist and writer of short stories. He wrote many novels of which the setting was the Potteries district of England and with Thomas Hardy, whose Wessex novels were appearing at about this time, helped to establish the fashion of setting novels in highly specialised localities. All his important novels are set in *The Five Towns*, his name for the Potteries.

Bennett was chiefly concerned with social problems and will go down in literary history as the novelist of the lower and middle classes. His best known works are: *An Old Wives' Tale* (1908), *Clayhanger* (1910), and *These Twain* (1916).

The following is a scene in London in the Great War and is taken from *The Pretty Lady* (1918).

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### AN AIR-RAID

WHILE they were hesitating a group of people came round the corner. These people were talking loudly, and as they approached G. J. discerned that one of them was pointing to the sky.

"There she is! There she is!" shouted an eager voice. Seeing more human society in G. J. and Christine, the group stopped near them.

G. J. gazed in the indicated direction, and lo! there was a point of light in the sky.

And then guns suddenly began to sound much nearer.

"What did I tell you?" said another voice. "I told you they'd cleared the corner at the bottom of St. James's Street for a gun. Now they've got her going. Good for us they're shooting southwards."

Christine was shaking on G. J.'s arm.

"It's all right! It's all right!" he murmured compassionately, and she tightened her clutch on him in thanks.

He looked hard at the point of light, which might have been anything. The changing forms of thin clouds continually baffled the vision.

"By God!" shouted the first voice. "She's hit. See her stagger? She's hit. She'll blaze up in a moment. One down last week. Another this. Look at her now. She's afire."

The group gave a weak cheer.

Then the clouds cleared for an instant and revealed a crescent. G. J. said:

"That's the moon, you idiots. It's not a Zeppelin."

Even as he spoke he wondered, and regretted, that he should be calling them idiots. They were complete strangers to him. The group vanished, crest-fallen, round another corner. G. J. laughed to Christine. Then the noise of guns was multiplied. That he was with Christine in the midst of an authentic air-raid could no longer be doubted. He was conscious of the wine he had drunk at the club. He had the sensation of human beings, men like himself, who ate and drank and laced their boots, being actually at that moment up there in the sky with intent to kill him and Christine. It was a marvellous sensation, terrible but exquisite. And he had the sensation of other human beings beyond the sea, giving deliberate orders in German for murder, murdering for their lives; and they, too, were like himself, and ate and drank and either laced their

plosion of the bomb. After all, one spot was as safe apprehension of the miraculous lunacy of war swept through his soul.

"You see," he said to Christine, "it was not a Zeppelin.... We shall be quite safe here."

But in that last phrase he had now confessed to her the existence of an air-raid. He knew he was not behaving with the maximum of sagacity. There were, for example, hotels with subterranean grill-rooms close by, and there were similar refuges where danger would be less than in the street, though the street was narrow and might be compared to a trench. And yet he had said, "We shall be quite safe here." In others he would have condemned such an attitude.

Now, however, he realised that he was very like others. An inactive fatalism had seized him. He was too proud, too idle, too negligent, too curious, to do the wise thing. He and Christine were in the air-raid, and in it they should remain. He had just the senseless, monkeyish curiosity of the staring crowd so lyrically praised by the London Press. He was afraid, but his curiosity and inertia were stronger than his fear. Then came a most tremendous explosion—the loudest sound, the most formidable physical phenomenon that G. J. had ever experienced in his life. The earth under their feet trembled. Christine gave a squeal and seemed to subside to the ground, but he pulled her up again, not in calm self-possession, but by the sheer automatism of instinct. A spasm of horrible fright shot through

him. He thought, in awe and stupefaction:

“A bomb!”

He thought about death and maiming and blood. The relations between him and those everyday males aloft in the sky seemed to be appallingly close. After the explosion perfect silence—no screams, no noise of crumbling—perfect silence, and yet the explosion seemed still to dominate the air! Ears ached and sang. Something must be done. All theories of safety had been smashed to atoms in the explosion. G. J. dragged Christine along the street, he knew not why. The street was unharmed. Not the slightest trace in it, so far as G. J. could tell in the gloom, of destruction! But where the explosion had been, whether east, west, south or north, he could not guess. Except for the disturbance in his ears the explosion might have been hallucination.

Suddenly he saw at the end of the street a wide thoroughfare, and he could not be sure what thoroughfare it was. Two motor-buses passed the end of the street at mad speed; then two taxis; then a number of people, men and women, running hard. Useless and silly to risk the perils of that wide thoroughfare! He turned back with Christine. He got her to run. In the thick gloom he looked for an open door or a porch, but there was none. The houses were like the houses of the dead. He made more than one right-angle turn. Christine gave a sign that she could go no farther. He ceased trying to drag her. He was recovering himself. Once more he heard the guns—childishly feeble after the ex-

plosion of the bomb. After all, one spot was as safe as another.

The outline of a building seemed familiar. It was an abandoned chapel; he knew he was in St. Martin's Street. He was about to pull Christine into the shelter of the front of the chapel, when something happened for which he could not find a name. True, it was an explosion. But the previous event had been an explosion, and this one was a thousandfold more intimidating. The earth swayed up and down. The sound alone of the immeasurable cataclysm annihilated the universe. The sound and the concussion transcended what had been conceivable. Both the sound and the concussion seemed to last for a long time. Then, like an afterthought, succeeded the awful noise of falling masses and the innumerable crystal tinkling of shattered glass. This noise ceased and began again.....

G. J. was now in a strange condition of mild wonder. There was silence in the dark solitude of St. Martin's Street. Then the sound of guns supervened once more, but they were distant guns. G. J. discovered that he was not holding Christine, and also that, instead of being in the middle of the street, he was leaning against the door of a house. He called faintly, "Christine!" No reply. "In a moment," he said to himself, "I must go out and look for her. But I am not quite ready yet." He had a slight pain in his side; it was naught; it was naught, especially in comparison with the strange conviction of weakness and confusion.

He thought:

"We've not won this war yet," and he had qualms.

One poor lamp burned in the street. He started to walk slowly and uncertainly towards it. Near by he saw a hat on the ground. It was his own. He put it on. Suddenly the street lamp went out. He walked on, and stepped ankle-deep into broken glass. Then the road was clear again. He halted. Not a sign of Christine! He decided that she must have run away, and that she would run blindly and, finding herself either in Leicester Square or Lower Regent Street, would by instinct run home. At any rate, she could not be blown to atoms, for they were together at the instant of the explosion. She must exist, and she must have had the power of motion. He remembered that he had had a stick; he had it no longer. He turned back and, taking from his pocket the electric torch which had lately come into fashion, he examined the road for his stick. The sole object of interest which the torch revealed was a child's severed arm, with a fragment of brown frock on it and a tinsel ring on one of the fingers of the dirty little hand. The blood from the other end had stained the ground. G. J. abruptly switched off the torch. Nausea overcame him, and then a feeling of the most intense pity and anger overcame the nausea. (A month elapsed before he could mention his discovery of the child's arm to anyone at all.) The arm lay there as if it had been thrown there. Whence had it come? No doubt it had come from over the housetops ...



He smelt gas, and then he felt cold water in his boots. Water was advancing in a flood along the street. "Broken mains, of course," he said to himself, and was rather pleased with the promptness of his explanation. At the elbow of St. Martin's Street, where a new dim vista opened up, he saw policemen, then firemen; then he heard the beat of a fire-engine, upon whose brass glinted the reflection of flames that were flickering in a gap between two buildings. A huge pile of *débris* encumbered the middle of the road. The vista was closed by a barricade, beyond which was a pressing crowd. "Stand clear there!" said a policeman to him roughly. "There's a wall going to fall there any minute." He walked off, hurrying with relief from the half-lit scene of busy, dim silhouettes. He could scarcely understand it; and he was incapable of replying to the policeman. He wanted to be alone and to ponder himself back into perfect composure. At the elbow again he halted afresh. And as he stood figures in couples, bearing stretchers, strode past him. The stretchers were covered with cloths that hung down. Not the faintest sound came from beneath the cloths.

### NOTES

**Zeppelin:** Type of airship invented in 1906 by Ferdinand, Count Zeppelin (1838-1917), a German. During the Great War of 1914-1918 they were employed by the Germans for raiding purposes. Owing to their size and for other technical reasons they were not a conspicuous success.

**concussion:** blow; the shock caused by the explosion of the bomb.

**nausea:** sickness.

**EXERCISES**

1. Describe the succession of feelings which G. J. experienced during the air-raid.

2. Show how the author makes us change our feelings about the air-raid in the course of the story. What means does he use for this purpose?

3. Explain the meaning of the following words and phrases:—

point of light; crestfallen; authentic; the miraculous lunacy of war; maximum of sagacity; inactive fatalism; inertia; the most formidable physical phenomenon; nausea.

4. Give the opposites of the following:—

deliberate; lunacy; sagacity; maximum; wise; physical; feeble; instinct; roughly; relief.

5. Analyse:—

(a) That he was with Christine in the midst of an authentic air-raid could no longer be doubted.

(b) He was about to pull Christine into the shelter of the front of the chapel, when something happened for which he could not find a name.

(c) "Broken mains, of course," he said to himself, and was rather pleased with the promptness of his explanation.

## XVI

### JEAN HENRI FABRE

JEAN HENRI FABRE (1823-1915) was one of the most famous of French naturalists. He was born of very poor parents and was brought up on a small farm by his peasant grandparents. From a very early age he showed his love of nature. At the age of eighteen he became a teacher and made up his mind to devote himself to the study of nature. Most of his works have been translated into English and have gained a wide popularity. The present extract is taken from Fabre's *Book of Insects*, translated by A. T. de Mattos and retold by Mrs. Rudolph Stawell.

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### THE GLOW-WORM

#### HIS SURGICAL INSTRUMENT

FEW insects enjoy more fame than the Glow-worm, the curious little animal who celebrates the joy of life by lighting a lantern at its tail-end. We all know it, at least by name, even if we have not seen it roaming through the grass, like a spark fallen from the full moon. The Greeks of old called it the Bright-tailed, and modern science gives it the name *Lampyris*.

The two most interesting peculiarities about the Glow-worm are, first, the way he secures his food, and secondly, the lantern at his tail.

A famous Frenchman, a master of the science of food, once said:

"Show me what you eat, and I will tell you what you are."

A similar question should be addressed to every insect whose habits we propose to study; for the information supplied by food is the chief of all the

documents of animal life. Well, in spite of his innocent appearance, the Glow-worm is an eater of flesh, a hunter of game; and he carries on his hunting with rare villainy. His regular prey is the Snail. This fact has long been known; but what is not so well known is his curious method of attack, of which I have seen no other example anywhere.

Before he begins to feed on his victim he gives it an anæsthetic—he makes it unconscious, as a person is made unconscious with chloroform before a surgical operation. His food, as a rule, is a certain small Snail hardly the size of a cherry, which collects in clusters during the hot weather on the stiff stubble and other dry stalks by the roadside, and there remain motionless, in profound meditation, throughout the scorching summer days. In some such place as this I have often seen the Glow-worm feasting on his unconscious prey, which he had just paralysed on its shaky support.

But he frequents other places too. At the edge of cool, damp ditches, where the vegetation is varied, many Snails are to be found; and in such spots as these the Glow-worm can kill his victim on the ground. I can reproduce these conditions at home, and can there follow the operator's performance down to the smallest detail.

I will try to describe the strange sight. I place a little grass in a wide glass jar. In this I install a few Glow-worms and a supply of Snails of a suitable size, neither too large nor too small. One must be patient and wait, and above all keep a careful watch,

for the events take place unexpectedly and do not last long.

For a moment the Glow-worm examines his prey, which, according to its habit, is completely hidden in the shell, except for the edge of the "mantle," which projects slightly. Then the hunter draws his weapon. It is a very simple weapon, but it cannot be seen without a magnifying-glass. It consists of two mandibles, bent back into a hook, very sharp and as thin as a hair. Through the microscope one can see a slender groove running down the hook. And that is all.

The insect repeatedly taps the Snail's mantle with its instrument. It all happens with such gentleness as to suggest kisses rather than bites. As children, teasing one another, we used to talk of "tweaks" to express a slight squeeze of the finger-tips, something more like tickling than a serious pinch. Let us use that word. In conversation with animals, language loses nothing by remaining simple. The Glow-worm gives tweaks to the Snail.

He doles them out methodically, without hurrying, and takes a brief rest after each of them, as though to find out what effect has been produced. The number of tweaks is not great: half a dozen at most, which are enough to make the Snail motionless, and to rob him of all feeling. That other pinches are administered later, at the time of eating, seems very likely, but I cannot say anything for certain on that subject. The first few, however—there are never many—are enough to prevent the

Snail from feeling anything, thanks to the promptitude of the Glow-worm, who, at lightning speed, darts some kind of poison into his victim by means of his grooved hooks.

There is no doubt at all that the Snail is made insensible to pain. If, when the Glow-worm has dealt some four or five of his twitches, I take away the victim and prick it with a fine needle, there is not a quiver in the wounded flesh, there is not the smallest sign of life. Moreover, I occasionally chance to see Snails attacked by the Lampyris while they are creeping along the ground, the foot slowly crawling, the tentacles swollen to their full extent. A few disordered movements betray a brief excitement on the part of the Snail, and then everything ceases: the foot no longer crawls, the front part loses its graceful curve, the tentacles become limp and give way under their own weight, dangling feebly like a broken stick. The Snail, to all appearance, is dead.

He is not, however, really dead. I can bring him to life again. When he has been for two or three days in a condition that is neither life nor death I give him a shower-bath. In about a couple of days my prisoner, so lately injured by the Glow-worm's treachery, is restored to his usual state. He revives, he recovers movement and sensibility. He is affected by the touch of a needle; he shifts his place, crawls, puts out his tentacles, as though nothing unusual had occurred. The general torpor, a sort of deep drunkenness, has vanished outright. The dead

returns to life.

Human science did not invent the art of making a person insensible to pain, which is one of the triumphs of surgery. Far back in the centuries the Glow-worm, and apparently others too, was practising it. The surgeon makes us breathe the fumes of ether or chloroform: the insect darts forth from his fangs very tiny doses of a special poison.

### HIS LAMP

If the Glow-worm possessed no other talent than that of chloroforming his prey by means of a few tweaks as gentle as kisses, he would be unknown to the world in general. But he also knows how to light himself like a lantern. He shines; which is an excellent manner of becoming famous.

In the case of the female Glow-worm the lighting apparatus occupies the last three divisions of the body. On each of the first two it takes the form, on the under surface, of a wide belt of light; on the third division or segment the bright part is much smaller, and consists only of two spots, which shine through the back, and are visible both above and below the animal. From these belts and spots there comes a glorious white light, delicately tinged with blue.

The male Glow-worm carries only the smaller of these lamps, the two spots on the end segment, which are possessed by the entire tribe. These luminous spots appear upon the young grub, and continue throughout life unchanged. And they are always

visible both on the upper and lower surface, whereas the two large belts peculiar to the female shine only below the body.

I have examined the shining belt under the microscope. On the skin a sort of whitewash is spread, formed of some very fine grain-like substance, which is the source of the light. Close beside it is a curious air-tube, with a short wide stem leading to a kind of bushy tuft of delicate branches. These branches spread over the sheet of shining matter, and sometimes dip into it.

It is plain to me that the brightness is produced by the breathing-organs of the Glow-worm. There are certain substances which, when mixed with air, become luminous or even burst into flame. Such substances are called *combustible*, and the act of their producing light or flame by mingling with the air is called *oxidization*. The lamp of the Glow-worm is the result of oxidization. The substance that looks like whitewash is the matter that is oxidized, and the air is supplied by the tube connected with the Glow-worm's breathing organs. But as to the nature of the shining substance, no one as yet knows anything.

We are better informed as regards another question. We know that the Glow-worm has complete control of the light he carries. He can turn it up or down, or out, as he pleases.

If the flow of air through the tube be increased, the light becomes more intense: if the same air-tube, influenced by the will of the animal, stops the



passage of air, the light grows fainter or even goes out.

Excitement produces an effect upon the air-tube. I am speaking now of the modest fairy lamp, the spots on the last segment of the Glow-worm's body. These are suddenly and almost completely put out by any kind of flurry. When I am hunting for young Glow-worms I can plainly see them glimmering on the blades of grass; but should the least false step disturb a neighbouring twig, the light goes out at once and the insect becomes invisible.

The gorgeous belts of the females, however, are very little, if at all, affected by even the most violent surprise. I fire a gun, for instance, beside a wire-gauze cage in which I am rearing a menagerie of female Glow-worms in the open air. The explosion produces no result: the illumination continues, as bright and placid as before. I take a spray, and rain down a slight shower of cold water upon the flock. Not one of my animals puts out its light; at the very most there is a brief pause in the radiance, and then only in some cases. I send a puff of smoke from my pipe into the cage. This time the pause is more marked. There are even some lamps put out, but they are soon relit. Calm returns, and the light is as bright as ever. I take some of the captives in my fingers and tease them a little. Yet the illumination is not much dimmed, if I do not press too hard with my thumb. Nothing short of very serious reasons would make the insect put out its signals altogether.

All things considered, there is not a doubt but that the Glow-worm himself manages his lighting apparatus, extinguishing and rekindling it at will; but there is one circumstance over which the insect has no control. If I cut off a strip of the skin, showing one of the luminous belts, and place it in a glass tube, it will shine away merrily, though not quite as brilliantly as on the living body. The presence of life is unnecessary, because the luminous skin is in direct contact with the air, and the flow of oxygen through the air-tube, is therefore not required. In aerated water the skin shines as brightly as in the free air, but the light is extinguished in water that has been deprived of its air by boiling. There could be no better proof that the Glow-worm's light is the effect of oxidization.

The light is white, calm, and soft to the eyes, and suggests a spark dropped by the full moon. In spite of its splendour it is very feeble. If we move a Glow-worm along a line of print, in perfect darkness, we can easily make out the letters one by one, and even words when they are not too long; but nothing is visible beyond this very narrow zone. A lantern of this kind soon tires the reader's patience.

These brilliant creatures know nothing at all of family affection. They lay their eggs anywhere, or rather strew them at random, either on the earth or on a blade of grass. Then they pay no further attention to them.

From start to finish the Glow-worm shines. Even the eggs are luminous, and so are the grubs. At

the approach of cold weather the latter go down into the ground, but not very far. If I dig them up I find them with their little stern-lights still shining. Even below the soil they keep their lanterns bravely alight.

### NOTES

**stubble** : the straw left in the ground after the corn has been cut.

**mantle** : the fleshy part of the snail which protrudes from the shell.

**mandibles** : jaws.

**doles them out** : gives them methodically and carefully.

**tentacles** : long, flexible feelers.

**torpor** : sluggishness, lack of energy.

**combustible** : able to be burnt.

**oxidization** : the action of oxygen on any substance.

### EXERCISES

1. Describe the method by which the glow-worm obtains his food.
2. How does the glow-worm light his lamp?
3. Express each of the following phrases in one word:—  
giving light; eater of flesh; without moving; at lightning speed; the return of the dead to life.
4. Analyse the following sentences:—
  - (a) There are certain substances which, when mixed with air, become luminous or even burst into flame.
  - (b) If we move a glow-worm along a line of print, in perfect darkness, we can easily make out the letters one by one, and even words if they are not too long; but nothing is visible beyond this very narrow zone.

## XVII

### RABINDRANATH TAGORE

DR. RABINDRANATH TAGORE (1861-1941) was of course, primarily a poet and his *Gitanjali* and *The Crescent Moon* are famous wherever Bengali and English are understood. In addition, however, the poet made a great reputation as a writer of short stories both in English and Bengali. One of these stories is given here. It is worth while observing how well the characters of the people of the story are portrayed; for, although the incidents related are simple and homely in the extreme, we find our interest maintained throughout. It is worth while perhaps to compare the character and habits of Baidyanath with those of Will Wimble in Addison's *Spectator*.

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### THE FUGITIVE GOLD

#### I

AFTER his father's death, Baidyanath settled down on the proceeds of the Government stock which had been left to him. It never even occurred to him to look for work. His manner of spending time was to cut off branches of trees, and with minute care and skill he would polish them into walking-sticks. The boys and young men of the neighbourhood were candidates for these, and his supply of them never fell short of the demand.

By the blessing of the God of Fruition, Baidyanath had two boys and one daughter who had been given in marriage at the proper time.

But his wife Sundari bore a grievance against her lot, because there was not the same surplus in the resources of her husband as in those of their cousin across the road. The dispensation of Providence

struck her as necessarily imperfect, when she could not show the same glitter of gold in her house, and tilt her nose as superciliously as her neighbour.

The condition of her own house gave her continual annoyance, where things were not only inconvenient but humiliating. Her bedstead, she was sure, was not decent enough to carry a corpse, and even an orphan brat who for seven generations had been without relatives would have scorned to accept an invitation within such dilapidated walls; while as for the furniture, why, it would have brought tears to the eyes of the most hardened of ascetics. It is impossible for a cowardly sex like man to argue against such palpable exaggerations: so Baidyanath merely retired on to his verandah, and worked with redoubled energy at polishing his walking-sticks.

But the rampart of silence is not the surest means of self-defence. Sometimes the wife would break upon her husband at his work and, without looking at him, say: 'Please tell the milkman to stop delivering milk.'

At which Baidyanath, after his first shock of speechlessness, might possibly stammer out: 'Milk? How can you get on if you stop the supply? What will the children drink?'

To this his wife would answer: 'Rice water.'

On another day she would use quite the opposite method of attack and, suddenly bursting into the room, would exclaim: 'I give it up, you manage your own household.'

Baidyanath would mutter in despair: 'What do

you wish me to do?’

His wife would reply: ‘You do the marketing for this month,’ and then give him a list of materials sufficient for reckless orgies of feasting.

If Baidyanath could summon up courage to ask, ‘What is the necessity of so much?’ he would get the reply:

‘Indeed it will be cheaper for you to let the children die of starvation, and me also for that matter.’

## II

One day after finishing his morning meal, Baidyanath was sitting alone, preparing the thread for a kite, when he saw one of those wandering mendicants, who are reputed to know the secret of transmuting the baser metals into gold. In a moment there flashed to his mind the surest chance of unearned increment to his funds. He took the mendicant into his house, and was surprised at his own cleverness when he secured the consent of his guest to teach him the art of making gold.

After having swallowed an alarming amount of nourishment, and a considerable portion of Baidyanath’s paternal inheritance, the ascetic at last encouraged Baidyanath and his wife with the hope that the next day they would see their dream realised.

That night no one had any sleep. The husband and wife, with astounding prodigality, began to build golden castles in the air and discuss the details of the architecture. Their conjugal harmony was so unusually perfect for that night that in spite of dis-

agreements they were willing to allow compromises in their plans for each other's sake.

Next day the magician had mysteriously disappeared, and with him the golden haze from the atmosphere in which they had been living. The sunlight itself appeared dark, and the house and its furniture seemed to its mistress to be four times more disgraceful than before.

Henceforth, if Baidyanath ventured even a truism the most trifling of household matters, his wife would advise him with withering sarcasm to be careful of the last remnant of his intelligence after the reckless expenditure from which it had suffered.

Sundari in the meantime was showing her hand to every palmist that came her way, and also her horoscope. She was told that in the matter of children she would be fortunate, and that her house would soon be filled with sons and daughters. But such prospect of overgrowth of population in her house did not produce any exhilaration in her mind.

At last one day an astrologer came and said that if within a year her husband did not come upon some hidden treasure, then he would throw his science to the winds and go about begging. Hearing him speak with such desperate certainty, Sundari could not entertain a moment's doubt as to the truth of his prophecy.

There are certain recognised methods for acquiring wealth, such as agriculture, service, trade, and the legal and illegal professions. But none of these points out the direction of hidden wealth. There-

fore, while his wife spurred him on, it more and more perplexed him to decide upon the particular mound which he should excavate, or the part of the river-bed where he should send down a diver to search.

In the meantime the Poojah Festival was approaching. A week before the day, boats began to arrive at the village landing laden with passengers returning home with their purchases: baskets full of vegetables, tin trunks filled with new shoes, umbrellas and clothes for the children, scents and soap, the latest story-books, and perfumed oil for the wives.

The light of the autumn sun filled the cloudless sky with the gladness of festival, and the ripe paddy fields shimmered in the sun, while the coconut leaves washed by the rains rustled in the fresh cool breeze.

The children, getting up very early, went to see the image of the goddess which was being prepared in the courtyard of the neighbouring house. When it was their meal-time, the maid servant had to come and drag them away by force. At that time Baidyanath was brooding over the futility of his own life, amidst this universal stir of merriment in the neighbourhood. Taking his two children from the servant, he drew them towards him, and asked the elder one: 'Well, Obu, tell me what do you want for a present this time?'

Obu replied without a moment's hesitation: 'Give me a toy boat, father.'

The younger one, not wishing to be behindhand



with his brother, said: 'Oh, father, do give me a toy boat too.'

### III

At this time an uncle of Sundari's had come to his house from Benares, where he was working as an advocate, and Sundari, spent a great part of her time going round to see him.

At last one day she said to her husband: 'Look here, you will have to go to Benares.'

Baidyanath at once concluded that his wife had received from an astrologer a positive assurance of his impending death, and was anxious for him to die in that holy place, to secure better advantage in the next world.

Then he was told that at Benares there was a house in which rumour said there was some hidden treasure. Surely it was destined for him to buy that house and secure the treasure.

Baidyanath, in a fit of desperation, tried to assert his independence, and exclaimed; 'Good heavens, I cannot go to Benares.'

Two days passed, during which Baidyanath was busily engaged in making toy boats. He fixed masts in them, and fastened sails, hoisted a red flag, and put in rudders and oars. He did not even forget steersmen and passengers to boot. It would have been difficult to find a boy, even in these modern times, cynical enough to despise such a gift. And when Baidyanath, the night before the festival gave these boats to his boys, they became wild with delight.

On hearing their shouts Sundari came in, and at the sight of these gifts flew into a fury of rage, and seizing the toys, threw them out of the window.

The younger child began to scream with disappointment, and his mother, giving him a resounding box on the ears, said: 'Stop your silly noise.'

The elder boy, when he saw his father's face, forgot his own disappointment, and with an appearance of cheerfulness said: 'Never mind, father, I will go and fetch them first thing in the morning.'

Next day Baidyanath agreed to go to Benares. He took the children in his arms, and kissing them good-bye, left the house.

#### IV

The house at Benares belonged to a client of his wife's uncle, and for that reason perhaps the price was fairly high. Baidyanath took possession of it, and began to live there alone. It was situated right on the riverbank, and its walls were washed by the current.

At night Baidyanath began to have an eerie feeling, and he drew his sheet over his head, but could not sleep. When in the depth of night all was still he was suddenly startled to hear a clanking sound from somewhere. It was faint but clear—as though in the nether regions the treasurer of the god Mammon was counting out his money.

Baidyanath was terrified, but with the fear there mingled curiosity and the hope of success. With trembling hand he carried the lamp from room to room, to discover the place where the sound had

its origin, till in the morning it became inaudible among the other noises.

The next day at midnight the sound was heard again, and Baidyanath felt like a traveller in a desert who can hear the gurgle of water without knowing from which direction it is coming, hesitating to move a step, for the fear of taking a wrong path and going farther away from the spring.

Many days passed in this anxious manner, until his face, usually so serenely content became lined with anxiety and care. His eyes were sunk in their sockets and had a hungry look, with a glow like that of the burning sand of the desert under the midday sun.

At last one night a happy thought came to him and locking all the doors, he began to strike the floors of all the rooms with a crowbar. From the floor of one small room came a hollow sound. He began to dig. It was nearly dawn when the digging was completed.

Through the opening made, Baidyanath saw that underneath there was a chamber, but in the darkness he had not the courage to take a jump into the unknown. He placed his bedstead over the entrance, and lay down. So morning came. That day, even in the day-time, the sound could be heard. Repeating the name of Durga, he dragged his bedstead away from the cavity in the floor. The splash of lapping water and the clank of metal became louder. Fearfully peeping through the hole into the darkness, he could see that the chamber was full of flow-

ing water, which, when examined with a stick, was found to be about a couple of feet deep. Taking a box of matches and a lantern in his hand, he easily jumped into the shallow room. But lest in one moment all his hopes should collapse his trembling hand found it difficult to light the lantern. After striking almost a whole box of matches, he at last succeeded.

He saw by its light a large copper cauldron, fastened to a thick iron chain. Every now and then, when the current came with a rush, the chain clanked against the side, and made the metallic sound which he had heard.

Baidyanath waded quickly through the water, and went up to this vessel, only to find that it was empty.

He could not believe his eyes, and with both hands he took the cauldron up and shook it furiously. He turned it upside down, but in vain. He saw that its mouth was broken, as though at one time this vessel had been closed and sealed, and some one had broken it open.

Baidyanath began to grope about in the water. Something struck against his hand, which on lifting he found to be a skull. He held it up to his ear, and shook it violently—but it was empty. He threw it down.

He saw that on one side of the room towards the river the wall was broken. It was through this opening that the water entered, and he felt sure that it had been made by his unknown predecessor, who had a

more reliable horoscope than his own.

At last, having lost all hope, he heaved a deep sigh, which seemed to mingle with innumerable sighs of despair coming from some subterranean inferno of everlasting failures.

His whole body besmeared with mud, Baidyanath made his way up into the house. The world, full of its bustling population, seemed to him empty as that broken vessel and chained to a meaningless destiny.

Once more to pack his things, to buy his ticket to get into the train, to return again to his home, to have to wrangle with his wife, and to endure the burden of his sordid days, all this seemed to him intolerably unreasonable. He wished that he could just slide into the water, as the broken-down bank of a river into the passing current.

Still he did pack his things, buy his ticket, get into the train, and one evening at the end of a winter day arrive at his home.

On entering the house, he sat like one dazed in the courtyard, not venturing to go into the inner apartments. The old maid-servant was the first to catch sight of him, and at her shout of surprise the children came running to see him with their glad laughter. Then his wife called him.

Baidyanath started up as if from sleep, and once more woke into the life which he had lived before. With sad face and wan smile, he took one of the boys in his arms and the other by the hand and entered the room. The lamps had just been lighted,

and although it was not yet night, it was a cold evening, and everything was as quiet as if night had come.

Baidyanath remained silent for a little, and then in a soft voice said to his wife: 'How are you?'

His wife, without making any reply, asked him, 'What has happened?'

Baidyanath, without speaking, simply struck his forehead. At this Sundari's face hardened. The children, feeling the shadow of a calamity, quietly slipped away, and going to the maid-servant asked her to tell them a story.

Night fell, but neither husband nor wife spoke a word. The whole atmosphere of the house seemed to palpitate with silence, and gradually Sundari's lips set hard like a miser's purse. Then she got up, and leaving her husband went slowly into her bedroom locking the door behind her, Baidyanath remained standing silently outside. The watchman's call was heard as he passed. The tired world was sunk in deep sleep.

When it was quite late at night the elder boy, wakened from some dream, left his bed, and coming out on to the verandah whispered: 'Father.'

But his father was not there. In a slightly raised voice he called from outside the closed door of his parents' bedroom: 'Father,' but he got no answer. And in fear he went back to bed.

Next morning early the maid-servant, according to her custom, prepared her master's tobacco, and went in search of him, but could find him nowhere.

## NOTES

**Government stock**: money invested in Government securities.

**minute**: (pronounce my:nute) very small, hence the meaning of the whole phrase is: with care for the very smallest detail.

**dispensation of Providence**: the way in which things are ordered by God or fate.

**superciliously**: haughtily.

**ascetics**: people who have renounced all luxury.

**mendicants**: beggars.

**unearned increment**: an increase in value which has been brought about by something outside the control of the owner of the property which has become more valuable. This is a term used by economists to describe increases in the value of land and houses due to such factors as improvements in roads and water-supply provided at the public expense.

**palmist**: a fortune-teller who predicts the future by reading the palm of a person's hand.

**Mammon**: the god of riches according to Jewish mythology.

**horoscope**: observation of the sky at a person's birth with a view to predicting his future.

## EXERCISES

1. Write a character sketch of:
  - (a) Baidyanath
  - (b) his wife.
2. Describe in your own words what happened in the house at Benares.
3. Does the author wish us to draw any moral from this story and if so, what is it?
4. Tell the story of Baidyanath from the point of view:
  - (a) of his wife, and
  - (b) of a sympathetic neighbour.
5. Give your own ideas of what happened to Baidyanath at the end of the story.
6. Explain the meaning of the following:
  - (a) There was not the same surplus in the resources of her husband as in those of their cousin across the road.
  - (b) The rampart of silence is not the surest means of self-defence.
  - (c) Materials sufficient for reckless orgies of feasting.
  - (d) His wife would advise him with withering sarcasm to be careful of the last remnant of

his intelligence after the reckless expenditure from which it had suffered.

- (e) Some subterranean inferno of everlasting failures.



## XVIII

### C. BERNARD RUTLEY

MANY writers have considered the idea of travelling from this world to the moon or one of the other planets. Such a feat is, of course, impossible, but everybody is naturally curious to know something, at least, about the celestial bodies which he sees by day or night throughout his life. This short article attempts to satisfy that curiosity and to tell us in a few simple words some of the important facts about the heavens above us. It is taken from *The Book of Discovery* by C. B. Rutley.

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### A JOURNEY INTO SPACE

WHAT is the greatest journey of discovery that any man or woman, boy or girl can make? One reader may say a flight round the world by air. Another, a long sea voyage, while a third may vote for a land journey into some little-known and savage country. All three are very good choices; yet all three would be wrong, for the greatest of all voyages of discovery is made seated in a chair, in a warm room, and with hardly any exertion worth speaking about.

There is a riddle for the reader. What voyage of discovery can possibly be made under such easy circumstances, and how can it surpass all other voyages? Well, this is the answer. The voyage is a voyage into space. Seated at the eyepiece of a great telescope, the discoverer can explore distances so vast that the human mind cannot comprehend them. He can travel such countless millions of miles that to write them down as we write down earthly dis-

tances would be to make immense unintelligible rows of figures.

Such is the voyage upon which we are about to depart, but before we start the reader may wish to know what *space* is, and in what way we shall measure the distance we travel. What is *space*? It is difficult to explain, for no one really knows the answer to that question, and almost all that can be said is that *space* is the place in which the Earth and the Sun, the Moon, the planets and all the stars which have ever been seen float and have their being, like tiny corks floating in the midst of an immense and otherwise empty sea. Has *space* an end? Again we have a question we cannot answer. The human mind cannot comprehend something which has no end, which goes on for ever and ever without a finish, but if *space* somewhere has an end, then what is beyond *space*?

Tremendous questions these. No man has ever yet found answers to them, and no one ever will; but at least they serve to show the reader the vastness of the place we are about to explore. Now to explain the way in which we shall measure the distances we travel. The stars which inhabit *space* are visible to human eyes by means of the light they give forth. We see them like lamps shining in the darkness, but the light by which we see a star to-day was not given forth by that star to-day, or yesterday, or last month, or even last year. The light which reaches our eyes from any one star to-day or to-morrow may actually have left that star five or

six years before; it may indeed, so vast are the distances of *space*, have started on its journey to the Earth 50, 100, 1,000, or even 900,000 years ago.

Light, therefore, is a thing which travels. When a searchlight is flashed on, the beam takes a certain amount of time to reach the clouds upon which it may be directed, but the speed of light is so great, and the distance to be covered so short, that the time occupied by the beam in travelling from the ground to the clouds above is not noticeable. Actually light travels at the colossal speed of 194,000 miles per second, that is to say, the beam of a searchlight, if the lamp were powerful enough to reach such a distance, would take exactly one second to reach the eyes of an observer 194,000 miles away. What a speed! Multiply this and you will discover that light travels 11,640,000 miles in one minute, 698,400,000 miles in an hour, 16,761,600,000 miles a day, while in the course of a year of 365 days a beam of light will cover the almost unimaginable distance of 6,117,984,000,000 miles.

Now we are nearing an understanding of how distances in *space* are measured. They are too immense to be set down in mere miles, so astronomers have devised a means of measuring such distances by light-years. First of all they calculate the number of years it takes the light of any given star to reach the Earth, and then they say that that star is so many light-years away. Thus a star which is one light-year away will be 6,117,984,000,000 miles distant from the Earth in the depths of *space*. A

star two light-years away will be twice that distance, while a star 900,000 light-years from our globe will be separated by 900,000 times that number of miles from the Earth. The reader can work that sum out for himself.

By this time the reader will have grasped the immensity of space, and will understand how we shall measure the distances we travel, so let us seat ourselves at the eyepiece of a great telescope and set out on our voyage of discovery.

If we start near at hand the first object we shall reach will be the Moon, and beyond the Moon, comparatively close as distances go in *space*, we shall find the Earth's sister planets about which you may read in another book in this series. After that there is blank empty nothingness for millions and millions of miles, nothingness which is peopled merely by wandering comets and meteors until we reach the star which, after our own sun, is nearer to the Earth than any other star in the heavens. Near, you will say, but how near? Well, already we have travelled 25,000,000,000,000 miles into *space*, and the light from this nearest star, the sun's next door neighbour in the universe, takes just over four years to reach the Earth.

What are these stars which spangle the sky on a clear dark night? They are suns like our Sun, many of them immeasurably greater in size. Quite likely, too, they are the centres of world systems, just as our Sun is the centre of its family of planets, only they are such great distances away, that, though we

can see the parent suns, the worlds which circle round them are invisible in the greatest telescopes.

Yet what wonders are disclosed to the discoverer who boldly sets forth to explore the immeasurable distances of *space*. To the naked eye the stars shine with a white or yellowish light, but seen through a powerful telescope the sky becomes a dark carpet dotted with countless jewels of all the colours of a rainbow. There are red stars and purple stars, blue, green, orange, yellow and white stars. There are twin stars which revolve round each other, and triple stars, two of which revolve round the third, and all these stars, no matter their colour, are suns, and may have worlds peopled by living things dependent upon them for heat and light.

Can you imagine living in a world lighted by one of these coloured suns? How strange life would be on a planet dependent on a green sun or a purple sun for its light, and what weird and wonderful effects must be obtained on a world lighted by two or three such stars. No sooner has a green sun set with its ghastly, ghostly glow than a red sun may rise above the horizon flooding the strange world with its fiery light, to be followed, perhaps in an hour or two, by the dim and gloomy illumination of a purple sun. An interesting but not a very nice world to live in, the explorer may conclude, so let us pass on to see what fresh wonders await us in the depths of *space*.

As our eyes travel farther and farther from the Earth we shall see numbers of luminous clouds

dotted all over the sky. Through a small telescope these clouds appear merely as patches of hazy light, but if the telescope is a powerful one they are magnified into clusters of stars which may be counted by the tens of thousands. These star clusters, as they are called, are actually universes of suns, just as our sun and all the stars in the Milky Way, which may be seen stretching across the sky on a clear night, are members of one universe. But the nearest of these star clusters is thousands and thousands of light-years away, far far beyond the confines of our own family of suns and worlds.

Other wonders which the explorer into *space* will discover are vast irregular masses of glowing gas which are thought to be universes of suns and worlds in the making. Such a cloud of gas is called a nebula, and during the course of millions and millions of years, from being incredibly vast and irregular in shape, it will gradually shrink under the attraction of its various particles for each other, and assume a globular form. At the same time the nebula begins to revolve, and as it continues to shrink, and become denser and still more dense, so does the speed at which it revolves increase until it is whirling round and round at a prodigious rate.

So pass untold ages, and then into the life history of this slowly shrinking and condensing cloud of gas there comes a time when it begins to break up under the very speed of its own revolution. This break up is also assisted by the attraction of other heavenly bodies, until all round the parent nebula smaller

clouds of gas are formed, all whirling round in the same mad revolution.

Thus pass more millions of years. The smaller clouds of gas in their turn break up and form still smaller clouds, which are themselves presently rent asunder, and as the ages roll by, all these clouds of gas condense and become more or less solid, the larger ones forming stars like our Sun, the smaller worlds like our world. So a universe of suns and worlds is formed in the depths of *space*, and so immense are these *nebulæ*, from which the universes are born, that some of them are calculated to contain matter equal in weight to nearly 4,000,000,000 times the weight of our own bright star.

Two millions of these gas clouds have already been found by the discoverers of *space*, and this means that there are two million universes of stars like our own being formed. What an immense thought! How huge beyond all imagination it makes the place in the midst of which floats our own tiny world; yet, if possible, *space* becomes still more vast when we learn that the farthest of these *nebulæ* is over 200,000,000 light-years distant from the Earth. How far is that in miles? There is another sum for you to work out.

#### EXERCISES

1. Answer the following questions:—

- (a) What is a light-year and why is this term necessary?
- (b) What are the people called who study the stars?
- (c) What are the people called who try to predict the future from the stars?
- (d) What are the names of five stars that you know?

- (e) What do we call a cloud of gas which will later form into a planet?
  - (f) What is the difference between a planet and a star?
2. Write an account of an imaginary voyage to the moon.
  3. Give an account of any story which you have read which tells of an astronomical discovery.



## XIX

### P. MEADOWS TAYLOR

COLONEL P. MEADOWS TAYLOR (1808-1876) was one of the foremost authorities on the Deccan in which he spent the greater part of his life in India. His most famous work is *The Confessions of a Thug* which is one of the finest studies in existence of the now dead *thuggee*. Meadows Taylor himself was one of the people who worked very hard to put down that scourge of India.

The following extract is taken from his novel *A Noble Queen* which describes life in the Deccan kingdoms of the sixteenth century. Chand Bibi, the Noble Queen was the wife of Ali Adil Shah of Bijapur. On the death of her husband she became Regent as the heir, her husband's nephew Ibrahim, was very young. Until her death she remained, in practice, the ruler of the country. She was killed in 1593 by her own soldiers while defending Ahmednagar against the troops of Akbar. The period of the following extract is about 1590.

The story with which we are concerned here centres around the young noble, Abbas Khan. He had killed in a fight a certain Elias Khan who had joined in one of the numerous rebellions which troubled the Deccan kingdoms. The followers of Elias said that their master had been treacherously slain and so a feud which threatened the peace of the whole kingdom was started. Abbas Khan demanded the right to clear his name by the ordeal of single combat. He was leaving the Council where he had made his demand, in the company of his friend Hyat Khan, the Kotwal or City Magistrate, when the treacherous attack here described was made upon him. Abbas Khan was beloved as a son by the Queen-Regent on account of the fact that he had been the companion and playmate of the young King Ibrahim.

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### THE ORDEAL

FOR a minute or two Hyat Khan, who had a large retinue, stood conversing with the young Khan, suggesting that he should see him safely home. But this he gracefully declined, and Hyat Khan had put his horse in motion to give his companion room, and

Abbas Khan's retinue had moved on into his place and awaited their master's coming. There was no one near Abbas Khan but his groom, who was holding the horse's head, and an attendant, who held out the stirrup for him to mount; his old friend the Mirdha and two or three of the eunuchs were looking on. Suddenly a man of tall and powerful frame appeared to leap from behind a buttress of the building, and exclaiming: "Elias sends you this!" struck at the young Khan with all his force. The blow was so powerfully dealt that his intended victim, helpless from his position, staggered, and, as his horse plunged, fell to the ground. Many who saw the transaction thought he had been slain, and for an instant the assassin was in the grasp of several of the eunuchs and others, but he shook them off with ease, and fled into the dark recesses of the citadel, where concealment was easy, or whence he might leap from the wall and swim the ditch, and so escape into the city. A few men with torches followed him, but returned after a vain search.

Had it not been for the shirt of mail, Abbas Khan had never spoken more, for the assassin's dagger would have reached his heart. As it was, except feeling a severe bruise, the young man was unhurt; but the shock had caused his old wound to bleed in some degree, and the warm blood, trickling down his chest, warned him to obtain assistance as soon as possible, and the good Padre was close at hand. As he was about to mount his horse, one of Hyat Khan's attendants, looking on the ground, had found

the assassin's dagger, and it was at once recognised by all. The point had broken off with the force of the blow, and was found where Abbas Khan had stood. As Hyat Khan examined the weapon, he declared it to be that of Yacoot, the chief retainer of Elias Khan, and commander of his bodyguard, who was a native Abyssinian, and had brought the weapon from his own country.

"He cannot elude me," said the Kotwal to Abbas Khan. "Ruffian as he is, he hath long been notorious for his crimes and violence. But thou hast had a narrow escape, my friend, and mayest thank the Lord and thy good mail for thy life; but, hark! the queen calls; go, I will wait for thee," and, ushered in by the eunuch, Abbas Khan was again in the royal presence.

There was no formality now. The queen stood in the centre of the hall, before the throne, with her arms outstretched. She had cast away her veil, and an agonised sob broke from her, while her slight frame still trembled with the horror she had endured when the first cry of "Abbas Khan is dead!" fell upon her ears.

"Thou art safe, Meeah!" she murmured, stretching out her hands, while he stooped and touched her feet; "tell me thou art safe!"

"I am unhurt, mother," he said, "though it was a fierce blow. I am always safe with thy blessing on my head; and see, is not that proved to-night? Inshalla! to-morrow will pass as safely, for I fear not, O my queen! my heart is true and my cause

just; but suffer me to depart, mother, for Hyat Khan is waiting for me."

"It is well," she replied, "else I should have ordered the Palace guard to escort thee home. Khoda Hafiz, may God have thee in His keeping! Ere morning breaks my thank-offerings will be at every shrine and mosque in the city."

\* \* \* \* \*

Abbas Khan attired himself carefully. His turban was of gold muslin brocade, and the links of the Milan chain were twisted into it as on the night before; but three twists were passed over his ears and under his chin, which protected his neck and side of his head completely. The shirt of mail over his muslin tunic felt easy and light, and the padding of the armourer prevented pressure on the wound. Over all he wore a splendid suit of rich cloth of gold of Benares, and jámahs, or petticoat-like trousers, which belonged to the full Court dress, but which could be easily cast off if necessary.

Hastily he examined the beautiful Toledo blade he had ordered to be ready for him, which was a broad, double-edged rapier, sharp as a razor on both sides. It was stiff, yet in the highest degree flexible under pressure, and might have been, probably was, once the weapon of a matador. Its quaint handle of inlaid gold balanced the sword exactly, and it was a weapon which inspired confidence in strong, skilful hands. Abbas Khan bound his waist with a rich brocaded scarf, the ends of which hung down on the right side, leaving the sword handle free. His reti-

nue was ready, and at the lucky moment, directed by the family priest, he mounted his gallant horse, with a shout of "Bismilla!" echoed by all his followers, and passed on to the citadel.

He entered the gate with many others, strangers, friends, and acquaintances, and made his way direct through the main thoroughfare between the buildings attached to the Seven-storeyed palace, and the main edifice in which lived ordinarily the king and his queen, Taj-ool-Nissa, Sooltana, the queen-dowager, and other members of the family; and finally reached the Futteh Maidan, or plain of victory, a large open space which lay before the great archway of the hall of audience. This is now covered with brush-wood, stones from the buildings around, and masses of crumbling masonry; but then it was smooth and clear. Not even a pebble was discernible among the short soft sward, which at that period of the year, the end of the monsoon, was in its greatest perfection.

It presented a noble and picturesque spectacle. Such was well calculated to stir the young soldier's heart. Around, at a little distance, stood the elephants and retinues of those who had already arrived. Some of their rich caparisons were of cloth of gold, others of European cloth, embroidered with gold, or thin native leather also embroidered. On their back, they bore howdahs; some large with canopies, some smaller without coverings, but all bearing the weapons, bows and arrows, lances, or matchlocks of their owners, with their distinguish-

ing banner or pennant.

Many of the noble beasts were excited and restless, and were trumpeting loudly, and blowing dust into the air with their trunks. Others were gentle and quiet and steady, while their drivers made them play off the little tricks they had taught them. In front of the elephants was a line of horses, for the most part splendidly caparisoned; and from their armour, the morions and coats of mail of the riders—from spear heads and sword hilts by thousands, as well as from the many dresses of cloth of gold—the blazing sun flashed with a power and brilliance that the eyes could hardly endure.

It was a sight at once most gorgeous and impressive in itself; the costumes and banners of the ranks of infantry, interspersed with the cavalry—Dekhanies, Arabs, Persians, Oozbaks, Circassians, Tartars of many tribes, Georgians, Turks, and many other foreigners; while a strong division of Beydurs, in their peculiar costume of conical leather caps and leather drawers, were by no means the least conspicuous or remarkable of the motley assemblage.

“Oh, that Runga Naik were among them!” thought Abbas Khan, as he looked towards the body, whose peculiar long-barrelled matchlocks and broad-bladed spears formed a glittering mass, from which the wild, quivering notes of their brass trumpets sounded at intervals. “Oh, that Runga were here!”

“Go, Yasin,” he continued to his standard-bearer, “see if Runga Naik is among the Beydur people yonder; if so, tell him I am here.” But Runga was

not there, and it was not known where he had gone; he had taken his men from Korikul and proceeded westwards.

Abbas Khan dismounted at the foot of the steps of the corridor from which the great hall was entered at several points by open arches, and passing by that which was nearest to his "misl," or appointed place, he paused for a few moments before he took his seat, and looked around him.

The vast area was entirely filled, except the middle, by rows of nobles and superior officers, and leaders of the divisions of tribes and troops, and formed a striking scene. All the civil officers, heads of departments, secretaries, and the like, were attired in the usual Court dress of white muslin, with simply-tied turbans of the same. All else, and they were by far the majority, wore, like himself, vests of cloth of gold, with the loose petticoat trousers, which, when seated, completely concealed their persons from the knees downwards. The varied colours of the cloths of gold, and of the numberless brocaded muslins, scarfs, and turbans, especially where a ray of sun lighted upon them, was dazzling and gorgeous in the extreme, and led the eye to the effect outside, where, from the basement of the hall to the utmost limit of the open space, the divisions of the troops stood in their appointed places.

On the opposite side of the hall sat the grim-looking body of Abyssinians, for the most part clad in black chain mail, worn over their ordinary costume; and in a prominent place among them Yacoot, their

champion, who, as he saw Abbas Khan enter, twisted what moustache he possessed with a defiant air, as, indeed, did most of the rest. On his own side, more towards the entrance to the hall, sat the chiefs of the Dekhanies, attired with all the brilliance they were famous for; and he saw that Hyat Khan, the head Kotwal, who, with the chamberlains, had marshalled the assembly, had placed between the several doubtful factions strong parties of Arabs, Turks, Persians, and other foreigners, so that collision between any was nearly, if not quite, impossible.

It was a spirit-stirring sight, and Abbas Khan, as room was made for him by an old friend, looked around him proudly. I shall have a goodly company to witness my fate, he thought, and be the issue as the Lord wills.

The audience hall is still in existence, but only as a noble ruin. The central arch of the façade is ninety-two feet in span, and of noble height, and the hall is perhaps two hundred feet in length. It is plain in character, but the groined shafts spring up to support the roof in graceful contour, like those of a Gothic church, and were once covered with a profusion of gilding which has been scraped away. The king's throne on the upper dais, which was reserved for princes of the blood, religious dignitaries, and prime ministers of the State, was empty; but a small balcony, which projected from the main wall of the edifice, was usually the seat of the queen, and it remained to be seen whether the actual queen, Taj-ool-Nissa, would use it, or



whether the queen-regent would, as was frequently the case, occupy the throne on the dais.

The suspense was not of long continuance. After a short interval eunuchs were seen to pull down the transparent blinds of the balcony, which denoted the presence of the queen, and almost at the same time the queen-regent's slight figure was seen to issue from one of the archways on the basement, and, accompanied by a crowd of eunuchs and royal slaves, seat herself upon the royal throne. The whole assembly to a man rose to greet her, and the hearty shouts of the troops outside proclaimed the presence of the honoured and beloved lady.

Then the business of the day commenced. Some accounts were signed and audited, some messengers from foreign States bearing despatches were introduced by the Mirdhas, or ushers. Some officers, who had been on service and had returned, arose, and, their names and style being proclaimed, went forward, kissed the steps of the dais, and presented the hilts of their swords to the regent.

As Abbas Khan advanced and passed close to the ranks of the Abyssinians, he was greeted by a scowl of fierce eyes, and murmurs which could hardly be repressed. But he took no notice, and resumed his seat without interruption.

"They will not be quiet long," said his friend, in a whisper; "they have vowed to be avenged on thee to-day for the murder, as they call it, of Elias Khan; but thou hast many friends, Abbas Khan, and shouldst have no fear."

"Fear?" cried the young man; "I know no fear in this matter. Wait and see; but let there be no violence before the queen."

Then the ushers called for petitions, and many were delivered to them to be read before the queen; but, as one approached the Abyssinians, Yacoot arose, and in a loud, harsh voice, and broken Persian, mixed with his own uncouth speech, demanded permission to lay his petition at the foot of the throne.

"Let him approach and speak," said the regent in her sweet, clear voice, which was heard through the hall like a silver bell; and, indeed, at that moment a breathless silence had fallen on the whole assembly.

"He cannot speak so that the fountain of justice can understand," said a secretary, "but the paper can be read. Lay it there," he continued to Yacoot.

"She will not get it, some one will take it away; I will give it to herself only," was his rude reply, as he drew his bulky figure to its full height, and twisted up his moustachios with a fierce gesture.

"Let him give it," said the queen-regent, stretching out her hand; and, apparently satisfied, Yacoot knelt on a step of the dais and delivered it into her hand.

"Now I have seen you receive it," he said surlily; "and we look to you for justice, and I will take it if not given."

At any other time such a threat would have had short shrift and a bloody ending under the great Adansonian trees, where traitors and other criminals were beheaded and several persons advanced to arrest the speaker; but again the queen's voice was

heard.

"He means me no evil," she said; "he is only rude and unmannerly; do not molest him; let him go to his place, and he will hear his paper read."

But Yacoot seemed to have no intention of moving, and might have created a disturbance, but that two or three of his brotherhood dragged him away and forced him to sit down. The petition was then read, and purported to be from the whole of the Abyssinians, claiming justice from the State for the murder of Elias Khan, and charging Abbas Khan with rebellion and cowardice in having acted on behalf of the rebel forces.

"Let Abbas Khan reply," was the queen's answer. "Let him come before the throne and speak freely and truly;" and the young man came forward, with the same easy, graceful step which all knew, and not least his noble mistress.

We know what he told the assembly, addressing them as his friends and fellow-soldiers, praying them not to spare him if he were guilty. "The headsmen are near," he said, "and if God wills it I am ready to meet my fate. What matter how I die for my queen!" and he said this with so smiling a face and so frank a manner that a murmur of applause ran through the assembly. But the Abyssinians rose to their feet as one man, and their swords, as if by one action, flashed from their scabbards.

"He hath a cunning tongue!" cried one. "We will cut it out of his mouth!" shouted Yacoot.

"Your Majesty had better quit the hall," said

Hyat Khan, the Kotwal, joining his hands, "and leave these brawlers to me. Whatever happens, Yacoot must be arrested for last night's work, and I have force enough."

"Ah! Khan," returned the queen, "that would be the sure way to begin bloodshed. No, I will remain as I am; I have no fear."

Meanwhile Abbas Khan stood where he had taken post as he addressed the assembly. He was exactly in front of the Abyssinians; but their action had no effect on him. Calm and unmoved, he felt secure though a hundred flashing swords were threatening his instant annihilation; but no one struck at him.

"Listen, all of ye, friends and brother soldiers," he cried in his manly voice which echoed through the hall. "I am accused of murder, of which I am innocent; and of cowardice, which is worse. With my honour I can live, but without it I must die under your contempt. I appeal, therefore, to our time-honoured custom of ordeal, to be decided before our noble mother and queen. Who of my enemies will meet me now? Even now, in the field yonder, and let Him who knows all hearts decide between my enemies and me. Behold, I am ready!"

Then arose from all parts of the hall cries of: "We believe thee, noble Khan; thou hast no enemies among us".

"But I have enemies, nevertheless," he continued; "and, but for an accident, I had not been alive before ye to-day; and even in the precincts of the palace I was not safe last night from attempted

assassination. I see the man before me who struck the blow; he is the champion of the Abyssinians, and it is he I would meet in fair combat unto the death."

"I will not fight him," said Yacoot to his friends; "he bears a charmed life, else——"

"Thou art named Yacoot; and he means that thou wert the would-be assassin. Behold!" cried Hyat Khan, taking the remarkable Abyssinian dagger from his waistband. "Ye all know to whom this belonged; and, look, the point is broken, yet Abbas Khan is safe!"

"He is a coward; I will not forget him," murmured the Abyssinian.

"Thou art accused of attempt at murder, Yacoot," said one of his companions; "'tis thou who art the coward, if thou refuse to fight Abbas Khan. Either to him and to God or to us thou must answer, for we tolerate no assassins."

"Come!" cried the young Khan. "Come, Yacoot! art thou afraid? Come, like a brave man as thou hast been. Nay, if thou dalliest, will this rouse thee?" and drawing his sword he slightly touched his antagonist on the shoulder, and escorted by a body of his friends turned to depart.

\* \* \* \* \*

Abbas Khan walked slowly out of the hall to the steps where his horse awaited him. There he removed his Court drawers and pulled on his boots, which had been fastened to his saddle. "Thou must

be steady and sure, good Sooltan, to-day," he said, stroking the head of his beautiful charger, who rubbed his nose against its master's breast, and answered by a low, loving whinny; and the young man, vaulting lightly into the saddle, loosed his shield from the saddle-bow, drew his sword, and paced gently round the front of the vast assembly, welcomed by shouts of generous greeting, and cries of "God keep thee safe!" His adversary did not delay to follow. He had replaced his turban with a steel morion, which flashed in the sun, but otherwise nothing relieved the dull black of the heavy chain mail by which he was protected. Many remarked that he looked livid as he mounted his horse, and that he impatiently jerked the bit of his fine Kattywar charger till it became violent and unmanageable; and he rode at full speed, as if it were his intention to overwhelm his antagonist. But Abbas Khan was too good a horseman to be suddenly surprised, and he evaded the charge by a dexterous turn of his horse, which required that the Abyssinian should follow him into the centre of the field, where now the combat commenced in earnest. The Abyssinian had armed himself with a short, very heavy, and much curved sabre, his favourite weapon, which was known by the epithet of "Kussab," the butcher, from the deadly wounds it inflicted; and he had also a large shield, which nearly covered his person, and with his armour rendered him almost impenetrable. But Abbas Khan now felt the advantage of his longer weapon, by which and his skilful

horsemanship he was able to keep his enemy at bay.

Who can describe the changing nature of the combat? Each now charging, now retreating, wheeling round, again closing, while blows enough to have beaten down the guard of a stronger man than Abbas Khan were showered upon his shield. The queen saw the whole from her seat, and her lips were moving in silent prayer as she looked towards the whirling figures, and clasped her hands; and the faint shrieks and cries from the balcony above proved that excitement existed there also. But the combat was of no long duration. Abbas Khan had tried his antagonist again and again, and almost despaired of finding a vulnerable point, when in a fierce charge by the Abyssinian he saw that a portion of his helmet at the side under his ear was open, and as the encounter continued he drove his long narrow sword through it with all his force. There was a gush of blood; and after reeling in his saddle, the huge champion fell to the ground heavily, and did not rise.

"He falls! he falls!" cried hundreds in the hall. "Look noble lady," said Hyat Khan to the queen, "he has fallen!"

"Who has fallen?" asked the queen faintly. She had been unable to look on to the end, for to her perception Abbas Khan seemed to have no chance before his enemy.

"Yacoot, the Abyssinian," replied the Kotwal. "Such is the wisdom and justice of the Lord. Ameen! Ameen!"

## NOTES

- Mirdha** : the court usher who directed the ceremonies.
- buttress** : a piece of masonry built at right angles to a wall as its support.
- Citadel** : the strongest part of the fort which, in the case of Bijapur, contained the royal palace and all the public buildings.
- Padré** : (meaning father) a Roman Catholic priest, one of the early missionaries, who is one of the characters in the story.
- Abyssinian** : Many Abyssinian and other African troops were employed as mercenaries in the Mohammedan kingdoms of the Deccan. To this day, the Nizam of Hyderabad has an African Body Guard as one of the regiments in his State Forces.
- Meeah** : a familiar Mohammedan title for an eldest son.
- Inshalla** : please God.
- The passage omitted (p. 186) describes Abbas Khan's arrival home and his departure next morning.
- Milan chain** : Abbas Khan was in the habit of wearing chain mail of the best Milan (Italian) steel twisted in the folds of his turban.
- Toledo** : a place in Spain famous for its steel.
- rapier** : this is, strictly speaking, a sword with a point but without a cutting edge.
- Matador** : (Spanish) a bullfighter.
- Bismilla** : in the Name of God.
- Seven-storyed palace** : the ruins of the sat manjli are still to be seen at Bijapur.
- morion** : (Spanish) helmet.
- Beydurs** : non-Aryan Hindus.
- Runga Naik** : a petty Beydur chief who was devoted to Abbas Khan.
- groined shafts** : pillars surmounted by groins, or the projecting curves produced by arches crossing each other at an angle.
- gothic** : the mediaeval style of architecture in Europe.
- façade** : the ornamental front of a building which faces an open place or street.
- dais** : slightly raised platform.
- Queen-regent** : Chand Bibi.
- style** : titles of honour of official dignities.
- broken Persian** : imperfect Persian. He could not speak the language properly.
- Adansonian trees** : baobab or monkey-bread trees, which grow to a very large size, especially as regards girth.
- precincts** : the immediate surroundings.
- this** : to strike with a sword would be considered a great insult to a soldier.



Ameen : (amen) so be it.

### EXERCISES

1. Describe the circumstances which led to the quarrel between Abbas Khan and Yacoot. How was the question to be decided ?

2. Give an eye-witness account of the combat.

3. What do you gather of the character of Chand Bibi and how was she regarded by her subjects ?

4. Describe the scene at the Durbar.

5. Change the following into indirect speech :—

(a) "He means me no evil," she said; "he is only rude and unmannerly; do not molest him; let him go to his place and he will hear his paper read."

(b) "I am accused of murder, of which I am innocent; and of cowardice, which is worse. With my honour I can live, but without it I must die under your contempt."

6. Use the following words in sentences of your own to show that you fully understand their meaning :—

elude, notorious, quaint, retinue, edifice, prominent, bulky, perception, flexible.

7. Write sentences showing the distinction in meaning between the words in the following groups :—

intend, extend, portend;

elude, delude;

mail, male;

sward, sword;

fiction, faction, fraction;

rude, crude;

lose, loose;

vault, vaunt;

reel, real;

perception, deception, conception.

8. Read through the extract again carefully and note any words or phrases which do not appear normally in modern English. State any reasons which you can think of for their use here.

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